The Christian Heritage of KOSOVO and METOHIJA

The Historical and Spiritual Heartland of the Serbian People

SEBASTIAN PRESS

The Christian Heritage of KOSOVO and METOHIJA

Christ Pantocrator,
main dome of the Gračanica, 1318–1321

Gračanica's uniqueness lies in the fact that the icon known as Pantocrator, which inspires liturgical awe, is depicted not just as the God-Man—i.e., God who assumed human nature—but as Co-Man, identifying Himself with man in his suffering and helplessness, with human pain through His suffering on the Cross and His humiliating death. Through His philanthropic gaze, the majestic Pantocrator lowers Himself and meets His creation. The eternal and infinite meets the finite in a particular place and time, within history, where they reconcile within the same fate. This composition, with its wrinkles in the forehead, was not repeated in other Byzantine churches, perhaps because its boldness brought it to the threshold of the psychologization of the divine drama. Gračanica's Pantocrator is truly unique, since it was not copied from anyone. It is original and loving, and for this reason it constitutes a portrait of God, as Christ's wonderfully loving eyes have revealed it to human beings. The riddle of human destiny finds its solution in the Pantocrator's theandric gaze.

The Christian Heritage of **KOSOVO** and **METOHIJA**

The Historical and Spiritual Heartland of the Serbian People

SEBASTIAN PRESS
Los Angeles 2015

Published by Sebastian Press, Los Angeles
Institute for Balkan Studies, Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts, Belgrade
The Episcopal Council of the Serbian Orthodox Church in North and South America, Chicago
Faculty of Orthodox Theology—University of Belgrade, Belgrade
BLAGO Fund, Belgrade
Serbica Americana, Los Angeles
Interklima-grafika, Vrnjci

Series MONOGRAPHS OF SERBIAN HISTORY AND CULTURE, *Number 1*

Editor-in-Chief Bishop Maxim (Vasiljević)

Editorial Board Dušan T. Bataković, Chief Contributing Editor
Bishop Atanasije (Jevtić)
Bogoljub Šijaković
Predrag Puzović
Gordana Kelić

Consultants Nenad Vukićević, Gojko Subotić, Herman Middleton, Fr. Damascene Christensen, Ron Radakovich, Ljubiša Čeperković, Irina Petrović, Dejan Ristić

Design Denis Vikić

Prepress and Printing Interklima-grafika

The Christian Heritage of Kosovo and Metohija: the Historical and Spiritual Heartland of the Serbian People. — Los Angeles : Sebastian Press, 2015.
pages : illustrations ; cm.

ISBN: 978–1–936773–18–3
"Editor-in-chief: Bishop Maxim (Vasiljevic)); Chief Contributing Editor: Dušan T. Bataković"—Title page verso.
Jointly published by Sebastian Press, Institute for Balkan Studies, Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts, Belgrade, The Episcopal Council of the Serbian Orthodox Church in North and South American, Faculty of Orthodox Theology—University of Belgrade, BLAGO Fund, Interklima-grafika, Vrnjci and Serbica Americana.—Title page verso.
Includes bibliographical references.

1. Kosovo (Serbia)—Religion—History. 2. Serbia— Religion—History. 3. Christian life—Kosovo (Serbia). 4. Christian life—Serbia. 5. Orthodox Eastern Church—Kosovo (Serbia). 6. Kosovo (Serbia)—Church history. 7. Kosovo (Serbia)—Ethnic relations. 8. Christian martyrs—Kosovo (Serbia). 9. Kosovo (Serbia)—History. 10. Kosovo (Serbia)—Civilization. 11. Christianity and art—Orthodox Eastern Church. 12. Christian art and symbolism—Kosovo (Serbia) 13. Art, Serbian—Kosovo (Serbia). I. Vasiljević, Maksim, 1968– editor.

DR2079 .C57 2015 2014952021
949.71—dc23 1410

Copyright © 2015 by Sebastian Press.
All rights reserved under International and Pan-American Copyright Conventions. No part of this book may be reproduced or utilized in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopying, recording, or by any information storage and retrieval system, without permission in writing from the publisher.
Inquiries should be sent to Sebastian Press.

Address all correspondence to: Sebastian Press
1621 West Garvey Avenue
Alhambra, California 91803
Email: info@westsrbdio.org • Website: http://www.westsrbdio.org
Printed and bound in Serbia

Holy Trinity – Abraham's hospitality, altar, east wall, Gračanica, 1318–1321

***Wisdom has built her house* (Proverbs 9:1)**, altar, east wall, Gračanica, 1318–1321

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Foreword – *Patriarch †Paul (Pavle)* 13
Introduction – *Bishop Maxim (Vasiljević)* 15
Gratitude to the Sponsors 19

I. SPIRITUAL ENDOWMENTS AND AESTHETIC INSIGNIA OF KOSOVO AND METOHIJA

Gračanica (a poem) – *Desanka Maksimović* 22
Serbian Medieval Art in Kosovo and Metohija – *Gojko Subotić* 23
Serbia's Monuments in Kosovo and Rascia (Raška) – *Alex Dragnich and Slavko Todorovich* 33
The Spiritual and Cultural Heritage of Serbia in Kosovo and Metohija – *Gojko Subotić* 51
The Church of Saint Petar of Koriša – *Gojko Subotić* 61
The Church of Studenica of Hvosno – *Gojko Subotić* 65
Patriarchate of Peć – *Gojko Subotić* 69
The Cathedral of the Mother of God of Ljeviša – *Gojko Subotić* 107
The Banjska Church – *Gojko Subotić* 123
Gračanica: King Milutin's Church and Its Architecture – *Slobodan Ćurčić* 131
The Art of Gračanica – *Gojko Subotić* 145
Unique Characteristics of Gračanica's Icon of the Pantocrator – *Fr. Stamatis Skliris* 168
Visoki Dečani – *Gojko Subotić* 173
The Church of Budisavci 215
The Church of the Holy Savior 219
The Church of Zočište 222
The Other Medieval Churches of Prizren 224
The Church of Lipljan – *Gojko Subotić* 226
The Holy Archangels Near Prizren 229
The Church of the Mother of God Hodegetria in Mušutište 233
Novo Brdo: The Largest City in Medieval Serbia 236
Velika Hoča 241
Kosovo Polje—Gazimestan 247
The Splendor of the Serbian Empire – *Steven Runciman* 249

II. THE KOSOVO COVENANT AND SERBIA'S HISTORIC DESTINY

The Battle of Kosovo in Its Epic Mosaic – *Svetozar Koljević* 259
The Hymn of the Kosovo Heroes – *Serbian Folk Song* 268
The Heavenly Kingdom in Serbia's Historic Destiny – *Bishop Atanasije Jevtić* 269
The Inscription on the Marble Pillar in the Kosovo Field – *Stefan Lazarević* 275
The Kosovo Covenant in the Light of the New Testament – *Bishop Irinej Bulović* 277
Patterns of Martyrial Sanctity in the Royal Ideology of Medieval Serbia: Continuity and Change – *Smilja Marjanović-Dušanić* 289
The Iliad in the Mirror of the Kosovo Cycle Poems – *Milan Budisavljević* 296
Major Philosophical Texts in Medieval Serbia – *Boris Milosavljević* 300
De-Mythologizing "The Kosovo Myth" – *Milica Bakić-Hayden* 313
The Battle of Kosovo (1389) and Battle Themes in Serbian Art – *Ljubica D. Popović* 323

III. THE BATTLE OF KOSOVO

Prologue to Kosovo: The Era of Prince Lazar – *Thomas A. Emmert* 347
The Kosovo Field, June 15, 1389 – *Sima M. Ćirković* 356
The Battle of Kosovo – Serbian Epic Poems 361
The Kosovo Legacy – *Thomas A. Emmert* 374
The Cult of the Great-Martyr Prince Lazar of Serbia – *Fr. Daniel M. Rogić* 385
Kosovo 1389 – *Saint Nikolaj of Žiča (Velimirović)* 389
Memoirs of a Janissary – Konstantin of Ostrovica 391
Kosovo 1389 – *Tihomir R. Djordjević* 393
Serbian Kosovo Ballad 396
Serbia's Greatest Battle – *Sir Arthur Evans* 397
The Thing Called a Nation: The Spiritual Issue of the War – *G. K. Chesterton* 399
Saint Vitus' Day (Vidovdan), History, Memory – *Bogoljub Šijaković* 403
The Battle of Kosovo and Kosovo Today: History and Memory – *Boško Bojović* 405

IV. MEMORANDUM ON KOSOVO AND METOHIJA

Memorandum on Kosovo and Metohija – *Holy Assembly of Bishops of the Serbian Orthodox Church* 415
Name and Territory 417
The Problem of Kosovo 417
Endowments-Shrines of Kosovo and Metohija Show the Serbian Character of Kosovo 418
History of the Serbs in Kosovo and Metohija 421
Medieval Serbia in Kosovo and Metohija 422
Serbian Church in Kosovo and Metohija 423
The Battle of Kosovo Polje in 1389 and the Further History of Serbian Kosovo 424
Appearance of the Albanians in Metohija and in Kosovo and the Arrival of the Ottomans 424
Great Migration of 1690 and the Further Migrations of the Serbs 426
Serbs in Kosovo and Metohija in the 19th Century and Their Persecution until the Liberation of Kosovo in 1912 429
Kosovo and Metohija during World War I and World War II 431
The Suffering of Kosovo and Metohija Serbs during the Period from 1941 to 1945 432
Kosovo and Metohija under Communist Rule 1945–1990 433
Kosovo and Metohija under the neo-Communist Regime of Slobodan Milošević 434
Situation in Kosovo and Metohija Immediately Prior to the Beginning of the Most Recent Conflict 435
From the Beginning of Armed Conflict to the NATO Bombing in March 1999 436
The NATO Bombing of Serbia and Kosovo and Metohija (March 24—June 10, 1999) 438
The Tragic Position of the Serbs and of the Serbian Orthodox Church in Kosovo and Metohija from June 1999 till today 438
Kosovo after the Democratic Changes in Serbia (October 5, 2000) 448
The Attacks of Albanian Extremists on Serbs in the Period between June 2003 and March 17, 2004 450
Conclusion 453
Pogrom in Kosovo and Metohija – March 2004 455
List of Churches and Monasteries Destroyed or Damaged during the March 2004 Pogrom 460

V. SERBIAN CHRISTIAN CITIES AND HOLY SHRINES OF KOSOVO AND METOHIJA

European Maps of Kosovo and Metohija in Old Serbia from the 16th to the 20th Century – *Mirčeta Vemić* 467

The Christian Shrines of Kosovo and Metohija from the 13th to the 20th Century A Shortened List – *Milan Ivanović and Dragan Jovanović* 483

Historic Monuments of Serbia: Kosovo and Metohija 526

The Suffering of Devič Monastery – *Dušan Kašić* 546

From Novi Pazar to Peć – *Alexander F. Hilferding* 550

The Inhabitants of Kosovo (Expulsion of the Serbs) – *Branislav Nušić* 552

Prizren – *Grigorije Božović* 554

On Gračanica Monastery and the Fresco of the Dormition (1941) – *Rebecca West* 556

VI. HISTORY, IDENTITY, LEGACY

The First Charter of the Dečani Monastery 562

Kosovo and Metohija: History, Memory, Identity – *Dušan T. Bataković* 569

Kosovo and Metohija: The Rise and Fall of the Serbian People – *Radovan Samardžić* 609

Kosovo—the Site of Judgment Day – *Petar II Petrović Njegoš* 620

Njegoš as Tragic Hero in the Thought of Kosovo – *Ivo Andrić* 622

VII. SERBIA AFTER THE 1389 BATTLE OF KOSOVO

Serbs and Albanians under Ottoman Rule – *Alex Dragnich and Slavko Todorovich* 627

The Fate of the Serbian Cultural Heritage between the 13th and the 20th Century – *Milan Ivanović* 633

Sources and Testimonies: From the 13th to the 20th Centuries 637

The Tradition of Kosovo in the Formation of Modern Serbian Statehood in the 19th Century – *Dimitrije Djordjević* 698

At Gazi-Mestan (a poem) – *Milan Rakić* 712

Simonida (a poem) – *Milan Rakić* 712

The Abandoned Church (a poem) – *Milan Rakić* 713

The Field of Kosovo (a poem) – *Matija Bećković* 713

Kulučari (Levies) – *Ivo Andrić* 714

The Blackbird's Field – *Vasko Popa* 715

Balkan Wars 1912–1913 719

Kossovo Day (a poem) – *F. W. Harvey* 722

World War I and New Tutelage for Albania – *Alex Dragnich and Slavko Todorovich* 723

Between Two World Wars – *Alex Dragnich and Slavko Todorovich* 726

Kosovo in Communist Yugoslavia – *Alex Dragnich and Slavko Todorovich* 731

The Suffering and Persecution in Kosovo and Metohija from 1945 to 2005 – *Fr. Savo Jović* 737

Cultural Genocide of the Serbs in Kosovo and Metohija – *Radosav Stojanović* 810

A Chronicle of the Contemporary Suffering of Kosovo-Metohian Serbs 813

VIII. CONTEMPORARY ACCOUNTS OF THE RENEWED MARTYRDOM

The Kosovo Question—Past and Present – *Dimitrije Bogdanović* 849

Serbian Patriarch Paul (Pavle): A Seeker for a dignified solution to the tragic fate of Kosovo and Metohija . . 857

The Chronicles of the Renewed Crucifixion of Kosovo – *Metropolitan Amfilohije Radović* 861

The Cry of the Serbs of Kosovo and Metohija – *Bishop Atanasije Jevtić* 899

The Destruction of Serbia's Patrimonial Sites in Kosovo and Metohija – *Mirjana Menković* 905
The Serbs of Kosovo and Metohija 1999-2007: Surviving in Ghetto-like Enclaves – *Dušan T. Bataković* . . . 935
Chaos and Disorder – *Fr. Sava Janjić* 946
Kosovo and Metohija at the Crossroads – *Fr. Sava Janjić* 954
To Saint Joanikije of Devič (a poem) – *Ljubomir Simović* 960
Divvying Up (in the Church of the Mother of God of Ljeviša) – *Miodrag Pavlović* 961
Determining and Integrating Kosovo and Metohija – *Bishop Irinej Dobrijević* 963
Serbian Children on Kosovo Today 967
The Scent of Children (a poem) – *Živojin Rakočević* 968
For All Abandoned Homes: A Pilgrimage to Occupied Kosovo (June 2001) – *Monk Andrew Wermuth* . . . 969
For Whom the Bell Tolls—Serbian Women in Djakovica 976
Hope in the Fields of Kosovo – *Abbess Michaela* 979
Selected Bibliography – *Dušan T. Bataković* 982
Bibliography of Major Studies on Serbian Art in Kosovo and Metohija – *Dragan Vojvodić* 990

Epilogue and Acknowledgements 992
Gratitude to the Donors 996
List of Illustrations 997
List of Contributors 1007

Concerning Orthography

Note on the spelling and pronunciation of Serbian words and names

ć not to be found precisely in English: a sound between the English *t* in tune, and *ch* in chalk
c as English *ts* in lots
č as English *ch* in church
dž as English *j* in George
j as English *y* in yell
lj as English *li* in million
nj as English *n* in new
š as English *s* in ship
ž as English *s* in pleasure, or French *j* in jour

Ascension of Christ, detail: the Mother of God, Church of the Holy Apostles, tambour of the dome, the Patriarchate of Peć, ca. 1260

Serbia in Europe, Kosovo-Metohija in Serbia

Foreword

Bishop † Paul (Pavle) of Raška and Prizren (1957–1990)

Archbishop of Peć, Metropolitan of Belgrade and Karlovci, and Serbian Patriarch (1990–2009)

For centuries the territory of the Ras-Prizren Diocese has been the center of our national and ecclesial life. It has remained so even after all the destruction by conquerors, for on it are found the remnants of the most important accomplishments of Serbian Church architecture, art, and literature. These Kosovo remnants are scattered among of the remaining faithful, who are also scattered throughout the Kosovo region.

The Christian ethos of the faith of Saint Sava, the faith which the people accepted and lived, testifies even today that these buildings were constructed with full knowledge of the eternal measure of man's worth and his labors, as well as the value of the labors of an entire nation based upon the Lord's words concerning the exalted good of service for the love of God and for one's fellow man.

This same ideal, service to God and fellow man, moved not only the powerful and rich, kings and noblemen, to erect churches and monasteries, but the common people as well, to build them—and, when necessary, to again rebuild them from the ruins and ashes—as in the case of the artists, scribes, printers, and those nameless donors, like those of the hand-written *Menaia* (liturgical books) in the Dečani Monastery, a gift to the church by Slava the Blind, and the "poor people of Prizren," great and small, who donated the silver cross to the church of Saint George, in Prizren, exemplifies this unselfish generosity.

In this way, long before the Battle of Kosovo, our people learned and strove for a heavenly understanding of life and death. This means that love of God is predicated upon love for our fellow man; that allegiance to the eternal Kingdom of Heaven does not mean the denial of our transitory life on earth, and that despite our faith in the immortal soul we do not deny our stewardship of our historical being.

Belonging to a people with such an understanding, the Holy Prince Lazar merely confirmed the importance of this allegiance: *more willing to disappear as men than to live as inhumans*. For us there is no other choice: *better a dead man than a living inhuman*. For a man, though dead, is not dead before the living God. In His sight, the inhuman is dead even while walking the earth.

Today, when dark clouds have again enveloped Kosovo and Metohija, we need to remind ourselves and others of the truth that no one ever asked us whether we wished to be born in this or that people, in this or that land. For this we cannot be commended nor blamed. But, whether we will remain as people or inhumans, that depends on us—just as it depends upon us whether we shall live or disappear before God and mankind.

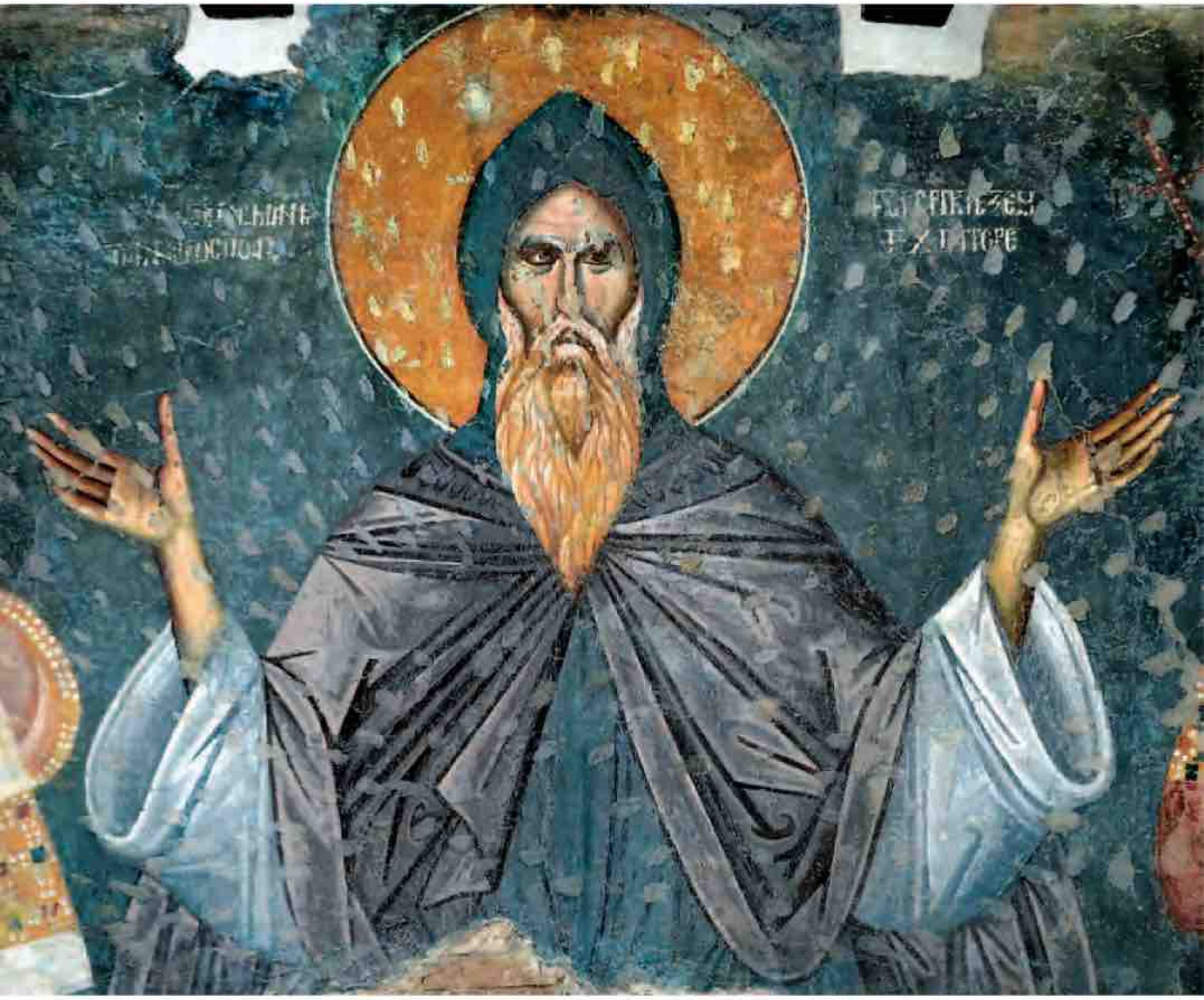
I believe that all those who participated in the publishing of this book did their best to present that which we accomplished through the centuries of our existence in this region, as well as our contribution to the struggle for freedom and justice in the world. It is good to ponder: what would the Serbian people be without their churches and monasteries in freedom or in bondage? What would we be without them, even today, before ourselves and before the world?

I owe a deep debt to these individuals who gave of their labor, as well as to those who donated their means, that this truly encompassing book could be produced. In the legacy of our Serbian land, Kosovo is our debt before God and before these suffering people who—living in their scattered homes—protect these holy places that belong not only to Serbs but to all of enlightened humanity.

Pavle of Raška and Prizren

+ Pavle

Forward to the first edition of *Zadužbine Kosova* (*The Endowments of Kosovo—Monuments and Testimonies of the Serbian people*, Prizren-Belgrade, 1987). The late Patriarch Pavle (1914–2009) spent 33 years in Kosovo as a bishop and he often expressed his concern for the people and cultural heritage in the area.



Saint Simeon-Stefan Nemanja, Grand Župan of Serbia (1166–1196),
narthex, west wall, Church of the Mother of God of Ljeviša, 1308–1314

Introduction

Maxim Vasiljević, Bishop of the Serbian Western American Diocese

Consider a Kosovo forever empty of the Orthodox Christian presence and spiritual radiance? "Of course not," a monk of old might have said, perhaps adding, "It isn't possible to talk about the Christian heritage of Kosovo unless there is *somebody* there to talk about it." Indeed, no understanding of this tremendous heritage would be possible without a real presence and meeting, without some measure of "congeniality" and spiritual sympathy. Beyond peripheral differences and worldly interactions and views, beyond the logic of West and East—the *Christian heritage of Kosovo and Metohija* testifies to a sign of the love of God. This heritage, like an outburst in the stillness, dissipates the deceitfulness of delusion. Eventually, it grants the truth of life as a cherishing of freedom and harmony for everybody on this *terra sacra*.

The area known as Kosovo and Metohija has had a dramatic and often violent history. During the early Middle Ages Kosovo was a part of the Serbian empire. It was Christian, and many churches and monasteries were built in the area; their walls were richly decorated with precious frescos. From the 15th century until World War I Kosovo was controlled by the Muslim Ottoman Empire, and later (after 1912–1918) it became a part of Serbia and Yugoslavia. Kosovo is not only the cradle of Serbian statehood and culture, it also comprises 15 percent of the territory of Serbia, a democratic state with as much a right to territorial integrity as any other member state of the United Nations. Historically speaking, the enduring monuments in the lands known as *Serbia sacra* are the result of the farsighted need of the autonomous Christian Church and Serbian state to master human destiny's ephemerality with a sense of perpetuity. They attempted to erect and establish a lasting identity amid the flux of time—mostly through art and culture and sometimes through wars and struggles—in an attempt to defend their national identity.

Certain books resist obsolescence because of their continuing relevance for ongoing dialogue and witness. *The Endowments of Kosovo—Monuments and Testimonies of the Serbian people*, appearing in 1987 in Serbian (eds. Atanasije Jevtić and Živorad Stojković) on which the book you hold in your hands is based, has played such a role. By advocating the priority of spiritual culture over politics this book has helped its readers transcend some of the ideological divisions in the politically charged atmosphere of yesterday's and today's Kosovo and Metohija. It also shows that the challenge of reconciling legitimate Serbian sovereignty with the desire of Kosovo's Albanians for self-government is not insurmountable.

This completely revised and updated edition of the book, *The Heritage of Kosovo and Metohija: The Spiritual, Historical, and Aesthetic Heartland of the Serbian People*, is in fact a new book, with more than 50 percent added documentation, testimonies, pictorial materials, and fresh historical analysis, and as a collection of testimonies has a very humble ambition. It maintains that the existence of successors and descendants determines the fundamental destiny of the sacred land of Kosovo. It bears witness to the biblical, eschatological truth that the future gives substance and meaning to the past. In that sense, "culture, when it is the most precious possession, is never the past," as André Malraux pointed out. So the same truth applies to these enduring spiritual, cultural, and theological treasures of Christianity, transcending national and political concerns. Only the "historical memory" can create self-awareness and become an incentive for survival and for securing national and human rights, as well as feelings of justice and dignity.

It is unrealistic to expect one book on Kosovo and Metohija to encompass all the crucial evidences about their art, history, and thought. This book is a living testimony to the exceptional efforts of the Serbian Orthodox Church to create a rich spiritual and material culture, preserving its centuries-old monuments and the Christian heritage of Kosovo and Metohija. The book conveys a wealth of information and provides valuable new insights into the telling testimony of richness of Serbian culture in its southernmost province. Facts presented here in superabundance are accumulated from over the course of more than eight centuries on this much-ploughed Balkan soil. It should be noted that the new English edition draws a large amount of material from the 1987 Serbian publication, including the Foreword from Patriarch Pavle of blessed memory. It contains texts from our noted historians, theologians, artists, and journalists. Most important of all, translated historical documents and charters, various historical chronicles, and recent communiqués and reports testify to our tragic fate in Kosovo. What gives life to the past and scope for future creative endeavor is precisely both the facts themselves and the interpretation of those facts. All of the contributors fully embrace the given opportunity to share in the presentation and affirmation of the Serbian people's cultural values by publishing this book. Their work aims to nourish the reader's personal reflection and seeks to stand as a verbal and pictorial monument to the martyrs of the great Kosovo Covenant, bringing the wealth of this covenant before the public worldwide.

The editor and publisher have the fervent hope that today's peoples in Kosovo and Metohija will be able to begin their discussions not from what divides them but from what unites them, emphasizing in positive and constructive ways the areas in which a Serbo-Albanian ethnic symbiosis has existed. This book invites all to consider their differences in the light of history and of the future.

There are already grounds for claiming that *The Christian Heritage of Kosovo and Metohija* will serve as a symbol to us and to all future generations indicating that, in spite of

all the temptations of history, it is they who will ensure that our Kosovo testament will be lasting. It does not invite anyone to a misanthropic and armed rebellion, but aims to resurrect, awaken, develop, and nurture in the Serbian people and all people of good will the ethos of true spirituality characteristic of the original *Kosovo Covenant*.

This book on Serbia's Christian Heritage in Kosovo and Metohija, its heartland in medieval times and through Ottoman domination, is intended to introduce to a wide reading public the oldest and richest treasury of Serbian medieval history and culture. Its authors are leading specialists in the fields in which they write, so readers may place complete reliance on the factual accuracy of the material.

Many of the monumental churches, monasteries, and treasures in Kosovo and Metohija have been plundered or destroyed by Albanians, but the best-preserved and the most beautiful among them—Ljeviška, Dečani, Gračanica, Peć, these foundations of the Serbian medieval kings, witnesses and testaments of our forefathers, and UNESCO World Heritage Sites—have been bequeathed to later generations as a testimony of a community of men founded on justice, law, and tolerance in all areas of social life. This reality can be seen from many chronicles, charters, legends and, most explicitly, from *Dušan's Code*, that great product of Nemanjić statesmanship. The Serbs justifiably feel pride at being the descendants of holy men and women, pious kings and princesses, and of those living in solitude far from the paths of power and glory, all of whom believed it was their duty to leave to posterity traces and records of the events of their time. Those events happened in a certain context, which we call "sacred history."

As a result of a number of historical, political, economic, demographic, and other factors, the situation in Kosovo has become a dangerous generator of the most recent crisis in the Balkans. In the culmination of the wars that followed the breakup of Yugoslavia, the "Christian" nations in NATO chose Easter 1999 to bomb Christian Serbia into submission and end Serbian control of Kosovo. In 2008 Kosovo declared itself independent from Serbia. The rich cultural and Christian heritage that survived Ottoman and communist rule is now at risk and targeted for destruction in spite of UN protection.

To put it simply, as Serbian *terra sacra*, Kosovo is sacred ground to Serbs, like Jerusalem is to Jews; that is why "the cradle of Serbian nation" is there. The full title of the Serbian Patriarch is: "Archibishop of Peć, Metropolitan of Karlovci-Belgrade Mitropoly, and Patriarch of Serbia." This title as well is a reminder that (also in the heart of Kosovo and Metohija) Peć was the center of Serbian spirituality for centuries, while the seat of the Serbian Patriarch and archbishops was the monastery situated at the River of Bistrica's outlet from Rugovska Gorge.

Therefore, Kosovo is the cultural, spiritual, historical, and aesthetic heart of the Serbian people. As such, the monuments and objects of material and spiritual culture in Kosovo and Metohija constitute an indisputable 700-year-old proof of the Serbs' rightful ownership of the sacred land. As a contemporary Serbian poet penned: "If Kosovo is not ours, then why do they want us to give it to them? If Kosovo is theirs, then why are they stealing it? And since they are able to steal it, I don't know why they are hesitating so much."

The chapters contained in this volume aim at tackling the subject of the Christian heritage in Kosovo and Metohija in different ways.

Chapter I displays the aesthetic endowments and insignia of Kosovo and Metohija. Here we encounter a visualization of an extraordinary story of life as well as a comprehensive analysis of an expanded Serbian cultural framework that represents one of the summits of Byzantine-inspired Serbian architecture. The leading monasteries founded by the Nemanjić dynasty (Gračanica, The Mother of God of Ljeviška, St. Stephen's Church in Banjska, Dečani, and The Holy Archangels)—with their unparalleled frescos—contain icon paintings showing the sovereignty of the state and continuity of Serbian rule, along with relics of canonized rulers. Its Great Church (the Peć Patriarchate) holds relics of canonized leaders of the national church. These sites, together with many other monasteries and a dense network of small parish churches all over Kosovo and neighboring regions, represent the basis on which the Serbs formed and consolidated their national consciousness and built up a national and cultural identity.

These monuments, then, concentrated and deployed over one territory, are national boundary-stones. The only intact survivors of the Turkish-Albanian Muslim devastation of these parts, they are still active centers of Serbian spiritual and national consciousness.

Original texts, written by experts in their individual fields, accompany the photographic plates and clearly demonstrate that Serbia's architectural and art monuments in Kosovo rank among the finest achievements of medieval Europe, while the literary creations from this region represent the very foundations of the Serbian written word, which helped form a national consciousness during this period. It was rightly said (in the Serbian Memorandum to the ambassadors of the European Powers in London in 1913) that this territory is a kind of "Holy Land" for the Serbian people; for it was here in the Middle Ages that they attained a high degree of civilization, and it is on the achievements of this period that their European identity rests. The paintings, form, spatial composition, structure, and architectural decoration of these monuments clearly reveal the creative synthesis achieved by Serbian artists from the Late-Byzantine period. The iconography of the paintings at Gračanica (1321) and Dečani (1335), as D. Talbot Rice noticed, "is in the main Byzantine, though the style is Serbian, as indicated by the love of vividness and precise detail." A new humanism characterizes these works, and it was this style that served as a basis for what Gabriel Millet termed "the Byzantine Renaissance."

In Chapter II, a large, rich, and varied selection of studies and papers, both theological and historical, inform us about the co-called *Kosovo Covenant* and its relation to Serbia's historic destiny. As one contributor in this monograph emphasizes, the original *Kosovo Covenant* is the New Testa-

ment expressed in the Serbian style and through the Serbian experience. Still, it is Christ's New Testament and not something else. The *Kosovo Covenant* does not exist outside of the New Testament. Therefore, the *Kosovo Covenant* is an embodiment of the New Testament in the fabric of our nation, in its history, in its being, and in its destiny on this Earth. The translated old Serbian literature and art inspired by the *Kosovo Covenant* are the most eloquent testimony of a level of enlightenment that never ceases to surprise us. Everything was knit and welded into a unity by the driving force of Christian faith, so that literature, art, liturgical life, and customs soon took on not only a new complexion, in conformity with the faith they served, but also a new soul. This chapter is intended to demonstrate that the inseparable unity of history with eschatology is of crucial importance for the understanding of the Christian character of the Serbian *terra sacra*.

The living and lively remembrance of its own medieval state was a dynamic cause in the Serbian struggle for liberty and unity centuries later, and an inextricable part of that remembrance is the cognizance that Kosovo is the homeland of the Serbian nation. However, the Serbs' approach to Kosovo is not simply based on memories of the past, nor is the mythical factor the most important element in their attitude. Every aspect of the memory of Kosovo contains the essence of the Serbian identity—past, present, and future. It is a remembrance of and appreciation for what we were in our past, an identification with and concern for what we are in the present, and a hope for what we are and will continue to be in the future. The same can be said of our historiographic or political reflections on the problem. Kosovo is not some imaginary legend of the past, but a real historical destiny that continues today.

Chapter III deals with the famous Battle of Kosovo. According to its ethos and historical consequences, the Battle of Kosovo left a deep imprint on the collective memory of the Serbs. That which is called the Kosovo Covenant and was epically sublimated in the form of a Gospel parallel—the Prince's supper as the Last Supper, Vuk Branković's betrayal as Judas' betrayal, the Prince's sacrifice as Christ's sacrifice—is a unique example of a conceiving of life and collective memory characteristic of poetry of supreme quality—the poetry of a patriarchal people, imbued with the Christian and epic ethos, which is also its greatest value and originality and which exceeds local and ethnic bounds.

Chapter IV contains the "Memorandum on Kosovo and Metohija" published by the Holy Assembly of Bishops of the Serbian Orthodox Church. In this document we can follow the complex development of Serbia's history in Kosovo and Metohija during the long ages from the 12th century to the end of the 20th. The region of Kosovo and Metohija had been settled since the early Middle Ages by a predominantly Serb population. The first Serbian states of the 10th and 11th centuries leaned toward Kosovo. Under Byzantine rule, right up to its final incorporation into the Serbian Nemanjić state in the late 12th and early 13th centuries, Kosovo was, in demographic terms, a Serb-inhabited land a Serbian land when political integration began. This is borne out by historical documents (the charters of Serbian rulers), particularly by a study of the anthroponyms (first names) they contain and the original toponyms (place names)—for in Kosovo and Metohija these are all mainly of Slavic origin.

This is connected with Chapter IV, which is a testament of the various Serbian holy shrines in Kosovo—even if they have been overlooked, erased, insulted, or demolished. Looking at enlisted Christian cities and holy shrines we can see why Kosovo and Metohija were two of the most developed parts of medieval Serbia, the cradle of its civilization with the most important spiritual and cultural centers, and its central part, in which many Serbian rulers were born. Of all the Serbian lands, Kosovo and Metohija have the highest density of Orthodox church institutions, churches, and monasteries (Dečani, Gračanica, Banjska, Holy Archangels, the Mother of God Ljeviška, Devič, and many others). The most important and most valuable monuments of Serbian culture and spirituality are in these lands; some of them have been included on the UNESCO World Heritage List. Through the centuries Kosovo and Metohija, with their 1,400 churches and monasteries, holy places, and grave-sites, have become for the Serbian people what Jerusalem is for the Jewish people.

Chapter V, entitled "History, Identity, Legacy," explains why it is extremely important that the Kosovo question be viewed in a historical light. If it is not, the present political situation is incomprehensible, nor can the real meaning and range of Albanian intentions be grasped. Moreover, the position of the Serbs in the Balkans is much too intricate and involved for it to be examined merely in the light of present events. For the Serbian people Kosovo put the seal on their identity, and it became the key to their history and the banner of national freedom. The Serbian province known as Kosovo actually consists of two regions: Kosovo and Metohija. One is a Serbian toponym and the other one is Greek. The name Kosovo is derived form the word "kos," meaning blackbird. Metohija comes from "metoh," indicating property of a monastery. Both regions are studded with old Serbian churches and monasteries dating from the medieval

period of the Serbian state that was centered there. Metohija received its name due to the fact that most of the land had been granted to numerous monasteries established by Serbian rulers. We are not dealing here with a myth, but a historical idea, which helps a nation forge a link with its real historical past. Cognizing the past is richer than "the past itself" because it is a renewed reliving of the past as a viable tradition, along with its appropriation and clarifying interpretation. Evaluations and interpretations offered here are objectively presented, but they are always open to scholarly dispute, new views, and fresh approaches.

Chapter VII presents Kosovo after the Battle of Kosovo. To stress the present demographic picture in Kosovo and maintain that these regions are Albanian simply because a large number of Albanians live there today is to overlook the fact that this land was inhabited primarily by the Serbian people as their heartland and, historically speaking, their motherland. There has never been any break in Serbia's attitude toward Kosovo as a Serbian national territory, no interruption in the struggle to liberate Kosovo's Serbs and make them part of the Serbian community in the whole country. Failure to observe real historical facts could result in the legalization of the consequences of genocide. And this, of course, would mean attacking an ethical principle at its very roots. So, this chapter offers a convincing picture of the time, place, manner, and causes of invasion by the Albanians and their colonization and oppression of the Serbs. After centuries of Ottoman domination, from the end of the 14th through to the beginning of the 20th century, the desire for the independence of the Serbian people became intertwined with the idea of the liberation of Kosovo.

A contemporary account of the renewed martyrdom is to be found in Chapter VIII. Instead of a real picture of Albanian-Serb relations, which for the past three centuries have been characterized by violent treatment of the Serbs by Albanian Muslim converts, we are handed the idea of "reciprocal responsibility," whereby the alleged 20-year period of "Greater-Serbian discrimination" against the Albanian population is equally balanced with the 200-year period of abuse by the Muslim Albanians against Christian Orthodox Serbs within theocratic structure of the Ottoman Empire.

The future of a multiethnic Kosovo is ambiguous and dubious. The UN has not prevented "ethnic cleansing in reverse" and the further destruction of medieval religious and cultural monuments. Over a thousand churches, monasteries and other religious sites witness to Serbian Orthodox immersion of the province over centuries. The U.S. House Foreign Relations Committee should urgently hold hearings on the status of the Serbian Orthodox Christian population and church in Kosovo—the only place in Europe where Christians live under apartheid-like conditions in the 21st century. The Serbian Orthodox Church has always advocated a peaceful multiethnic cohabitation, within mutually acceptable status solution between Belgrade and Priština.

The policy of "ethnic purity," if we take a look at history, is always racist in character. Nothing can justify it, no matter who pursues it. Least of all can it be justified by pseudo-historical mystification. On the other hand, it cannot be hushed up by a simplistic tale of peaceful, harmonious, and idyllic relations between nations and nationalities in the region. There again, the logic that says the status of a region depends on the current situation and demographic ratio — regardless of how, when, and in what circumstances that situation arose and those relations were established — is absolutely untenable in human, moral, and historical terms.

It should be noted that the illustrations in this book have been chosen from a great mass of fine materials. Their object is to illustrate primarily the quality of the artistry of Serbian Kosovo and Metohija throughout the centuries, but also the historical continuity of the Christian heritage in those lands. In this sense, this monograph is a humble offering to the international scholarly and cultural audience providing a closer insight into the spiritual and cultural values of the Serbian people through an account of the multiple (artistic, architectural, literary, etc.) achievements embodied in the unique monuments of Serbian medieval culture. Certain parts of this book have already appeared elsewhere. Many of them, however, are published for the first time here. In both cases, the text has undergone special revision in view of the present edition, which is unique in its synthesis.

Special and warmest gratitude is due to Prof. Dušan T. Bataković, director of The Institute of Balkan Studies, Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts, Belgrade. It has been a pleasure and a rewarding experience to have had many discussions about the contents of this book with him during the process of putting it together. The book benefited from his historical expertise and critical insights and was vastly improved by his extensive knowledge of history and art. We are indebted to Prof. Bogoljub Šijaković, professor of Philosophy at the Faculty of Orthodox Theology, University of Belgrade, for the great amount of time and work he contributed toward the publication of this book.

We would like to express our sincere gratitude to the authors of the texts, acknowledged as the leading specialists in their respective fields of endeavor, as well as to Denis Vikić, the designer of this book's layout. We would particularly like to thank the translators and revisers, as well as all individuals and institutions who have assisted in bringing this monograph before the public worldwide.

We are grateful for the help offered by Sebastian Press, the publishing house of the Serbian Western American Diocese. Sebastian Press publications are produced in Serbia to the finest technical and publishing standards. Large-format photographs (taken by Nenad Vukićević and his assistants using the finest photographic equipment available) provide the reader with a stunning visual experience of the Serbian spiritual, cultural, and aesthetic heritage. The result is a unique book that is a pleasure to read and a treasure to own.

Let this volume serve as proof of our gratitude to those unknown creators for the immeasurably rich heritage they have left us and to those who still remain on this *terra sacra*, in spite of all the difficulties.

We particularly thank all the sponsors of this monograph. A special page of recognition is dedicated to them.

Gratitude to the Sponsors

Benefactor
Ljubomir Krstajić

Platinum
BLAGO Fund (Nenad & Jelena Vukićević)
Ron & Mickey Radakovich
Central Council of the Serbian Orthodox Church in North and South America
Steve & Katarina Radakovich
Mike Radakovich
Jasmina & Don Boulanger
Dan Lastavich & Violet Smilanich
Saint Sava Serbian Ortodox Church, Jackson
Nikolas and Helen Malinovich
Milena Protich
Saint Steven's Serbian Orthodox Cathedral, Alhambra

Gold
Alexander Machaskee
Ljubomir & Geneviève Mihailović
Brian & Marilyn Gerich
Bishop Longin of New Gračanica
Lazar Šaraba
Milan Lešić
Saint Sava S. O. Church San Gabriel
Bishop Irinej of Australia and New Zealand
Stan Grgich
Peter Bajich and Family
Serbian National Child Society of Canada
Clergy Brotherhood of SOC
Fr. Živojin Jakovljević
Ranko Dabižljević
Milan, Jovan & Nikola Stoković
Fr. Dobrivoje Milunović
First Serbian Benevolent Society
Leon Lisaght
Ronald Diklich
Saint Sava Serbian Orthodox Cathedral, New York
WestPac Wealth Partners, LLC
The Saint Sava Heritage book fund
Slavko Panović and Serbian National Defense
Nemanja Kusturica
Bogoljub, Darinka & Marija Šijaković

Silver
Hilandar Monastery
Fr. Petar Jovanović
Rev. Radomir & Alena Plavsic
John M. & Julie A. Delich
Peter N. Kujachich
Steve & Irene Ruzich- In Memoriam
Duke & Florence Rakich
Saint Sava S. O. Church Phoenix
Assumption of the Mother of God Parish, Fair Oaks
Ronald M. Zobenica
Ljubiša & Marija Milicich
Vanesa Marija Denker
Fr. Dušan & Ljiljana Bunjević
Professor Sam and Jessie Mikolaski
RS Cooperation Trade and Investment
Nedeljko, Boris & Alexander Price
Fr. Stephen Tumbas
Ilija & Sonja Orlović
Fr. Djokan Majstorović
Vaso & Ika Manojlovich Memorial
Stefan & Slobodan Jeftović

Next page:
Saint John the Baptist,
Chapel of Saint Nicholas, apse, Gračanica, 1318–1321

I

SPIRITUAL ENDOWMENTS AND AESTHETIC INSIGNIA OF KOSOVO AND METOHIJA

Gračanica Monastery, Church of the Mother of God, southwest view

Gračanica

Desanka Maksimović

If only you were not made of stone, Gračanica,
if only you could ascend to the sky
like the Virgins of Mileševa and Sopoćani,
the crows might not walk about your narthex
and alien hands weed the grass nearby.

Or if your bells, Gračanica, did not beat
like our forfather's hearts,
if only the saints on your iconostasis
did not have our builders arms and feet
or your angels Simonida's face.

If only you were not sunk so deep
in that soil and in our very selves
if you were not to us a name to swear by
if only you were not made of stone, Gračanica,
if only you could be lifted up high.

If only you were an apple, Gračanica,
that we might put you in our bosom
and warm you, cold with age as you are,
if only our long-gone forefather's bones
where not scattered about you near and far.

If only we could lift you onto Mount Tara
or move you to the churchyard of Kalenić, or try
to forget the faces painted on your altar,
if only you were not made of stone, Gračanica,
if only you could ascend to the sky.

Serbian Medieval Art in Kosovo and Metohija

Gojko Subotić

THE LARGE province of Kosovo in the south of Serbia, rich in fertile plains and silver ore mingled with gold, is no less rich in cultural monuments, churches built in the Middle Ages by rulers and church dignitaries, noblemen, clergy and monks, and—as an old notice has it—by "the impoverished and the middling poor."

Over time, Kosovo has encompassed several regions which were historically and geographically, though not administratively, distinct.[1] At the end of the war (1945), in a new subdivision of the country, an autonomous province within Serbia which covered the same surface area was given the official name *Kosovo and Metohija*,[2] which applied to two naturally distinct units, stretches of plains and the slopes of nearby mountains separated by low hillocks and saddles. A watershed divides the rivers which flow into the Black, Aegean and Adriatic seas. Its position has determined the significance of Kosovo in the center of the Balkan peninsula: at the intersection of major roads running from several directions, heading seaward. This was the "Zeta route"—the valley of the Drim River toward Scutari—the shortest connection, via Prizren, along which ran most of the traffic between the interior of the Balkans and the Adriatic Coast.

From a historical perspective, the heart of the Province's territory is Kosovo Field. Because of the fateful events which occurred there this place became deeply embedded in the Serbian consciousness and was invested early with special significance. Notes taken by Bishop Martin Segonus in the second half of the 15th century have recently come to light. Travelling toward Skoplje, he wrote that the field was roughly 70 miles long and "renowned for battles between different nations." He certainly must have had in mind the famous clash of the Serbian forces gathered around Prince Lazar and the Ottoman army under the command of Sultan Murad I himself—a battle in which both rulers lost their lives on 15 June 1389. The battle had far-reaching consequences for the future of the Balkan states, despite the fact that the first news to reach the West reported a great success for the Christian warriors. At a later date the field of Kosovo—as prelate Segonus coming from Novo Brdo knew only too well—was again a theatre of war. In the autumn of 1448, the Ottomans crushed Hungarian military leader John Hunyadi in command of an anti-Ottoman alliance, and several years later, in 1455, the Ottomans took possession of these lands for many years to come.

Kosovo had become integrated within the borders of the Serbian state as early as the end of the 12th century, during the reign of its founder Grand *župan* Stefan Nemanja. However, no monuments of art dating from the first decades of new rule have survived. Neither do remains of Byzantine structures reveal much about ecclesiastical centers from the previous age. A somewhat fuller picture is offered by archeological excavations of older fortresses that long defended these eastern frontiers of the Empire.

A considerable impetus to the spiritual and artistic life was provided by the foundation of the independent Serbian Archbishopric with its seat in the monastery of Žiča (1219). Its first head, St. Sava, Nemanja's youngest son, established bishoprics whose network relied on the tradition of the Byzantine ecclesiastical administration with the centers in ancient Ulpiana and Prizren. In connection with this, artistic activity can be simultaneously followed from the twenties of the 13th century in the cathedrals which were built or restored, but also in the modest dwellings of monks.

In broad terms, the development of art in Kosovo depended on the position that this rich region held in the life of the country. It therefore saw its greatest rise in the period when rulers lived in its towns, and Serbian spiritual leaders held court in Peć, hitherto a remote estate of the Archbishopric. The very transfer of the spiritual throne from Žiča, after its demolition in an enemy attack, is with good reason brought into connection with the proximity of the king's court, in which the head of the church was invested with a major role and duties.

In the entire art history of medieval Serbia, the sacred buildings of Kosovo, with their number and character represent the most significant part of the heritage from its age of prosperity in the second half of the 14th century. Broad prospects were opened to art at that time, with new ideas and styles arriving from Byzantium. They did not,

---

[1] "Not a single administrative district is known from the period of the medieval Serbian state and early Ottoman rule having 'Kosovo' in its name" (S. Ćirković, "Srednjovekovna prošlost današnjeg Kosova," *Zbornik radova Filozofskog fakulteta* XV 1, Belgrade 1985, p. 152).

[2] Until the significant changes of the Constitution in 1968.

however, exclude the traditional presence of western artistic forms that reached the interior of the country from the other side of the coast via the towns on the Adriatic Coast.

Both the social position and financial resources of those who commissioned the building were directly manifested in its appearance. In size and ornamentation, opulence of material and aesthetic conceptions, rulers' endowments differed from the more modest churches built by archbishops using less opulent materials in their seat in Peć, the interior of which was adorned by frescos interpreting in a sublime manner the specific ideas and culture of monastic life. Even greater was the difference between edifices of the highest representatives of secular and spiritual authority and the endowments of lower feudal lords, in particular modest village churches or simple caves arranged for the prayers of anchorites.

Because the church held a special position within the Serbian state, the influences exerted by the cultures of the East and the West, with the Greek and the Latin and their respective religious and literary traditions, were felt more acutely in the life of the Kosovo region than they were elsewhere. Nevertheless, the spread of Byzantine literacy played a decisive role, and with it various genres of domestic theological literature, which evolved until the 10th century.

On the other hand, there were stylistically heterogenous forms existing in parallel, intertwined in architecture and sculpture, occasionally producing startling symbioses. Coexisting for years in a mutual tolerance which might surprise the uninformed, artists, regardless of their own religious affiliation and artistic training, respected the character of the other existing denominations and fulfilled in a solicitous manner their cultural requirements to the last. A telling instance of religious breadth is the fact that King Stefan Dečanski (1322–1331), recollecting years spent in asylum in the monastery of Christ the Pantocrator in Constantinople, decided to devote a large mausoleum church in the monastery of Dečani to the same patron, but entrusted its construction to Franciscan Vitto, a member of the Friars Minor of Cattaro.

These coordinates can be comprehended fully only with a broader insight into the economic and social life of medieval Serbia. Its economy was considerably boosted by the exploitation of mineral resources on the territory of Kopaonik and Novo Brdo in particular, dating to the early 14th century. Mining was introduced to Serbia by a group of Silesians who were assimilated over time, but retained technical terms for their work and kept the Catholic faith. This religion was also shared by numerous merchants and lessees from Dubrovnik, Cattaro and elsewhere, who had their colonies in mining settlements and marketplaces, and raised churches there. Rich coastal archives offer a wealth of data on the travels through Kosovo or permanent sojourns there by people from the coastal area, dubbed *Latins* by the people of Kosovo because of their religion. High office and assignments of significance at the Serbian royal court were entrusted to members of patrician families from the coastal region, primarily from Cattaro. Versed in all manner of jobs, these men were most frequently in charge of the royal purse. Their names are encountered in the West, whither, as they were acquainted with circumstances there, they travelled to

Ascension of Christ, Church of the Holy Apostles, dome, the Patriarchate of Peć, ca. 1260

conduct negotiations, often delicate and long, especially when the possibility of union was being discussed at the papal court.[3] Initiatives of this kind came from both sides and, most of them, interestingly, in the first half of the 14th century. The permanent association of the country with the tradition of Orthodoxy, however, at whose great

[3] The bond between the Serbian royal court and the people of Cattaro is perhaps best expressed by a famous episode from the time of King Uroš I, 1247, when a conflict broke out between the Archbishoprics of Bar and Dubrovnik. Refusing to recognize the jurisdiction of the Dubrovnik prelate over their territory, the citizens of Bar and their clergy drove away envoys from Dubrovnik (who, in their defense, had made mention of the Pope) with abuses and cries: "Quid est papa? Dominus rex Urosius est noster papa" (S. Stanojević, *Borba za samostalnost katoličke crkve u nemanjičkoj državi*, Belgrade 1912, 105–106; *Istorija Crne Gore*, II, 1, Titograd 1980, 22–23 (S. Ćirković).

Resurrectional Appearances of Christ,
altar vault, Dečani, ca. 1339

center, Mt. Athos, Stefan Nemanja built the monastery of Hilandar for the monks of his "blood,"[4] was never seriously called into question by such ideas.

When Milutin conquered lands to the south and married Princess Simonis, daughter of Andronikos II in 1298, Serbia's connections with the political and social life of Byzantium, its institutions and customs grew closer yet. At the same time spiritual ties were strengthened, particularly with Mount Athos, where ideas and the monastic life provided a special school to eminent prelates, men of letters and translators. Artists, summoned to work for rulers and ecclesiastical dignitaries, came to Mt. Athos from conquered Byzantine provinces and the larger cities, primarily Thessalonica.

Although by the close of the 13th century the territories to the south of Skoplje were within the Serbian state, the courts of King Milutin were located in Kosovo, in a lowland region. These rather small towns whose names

[4] The monastery was founded eight centuries ago, in 1198, with the consent of the Emperor Alexios III Angelos (1195–1203), who, in connection with this, issued a chrysobul to St. Sava.

were noted at the end of the ruler's charters, have disappeared nearly without a trace, while to the north of them remained Priština, an unfortified town in which Stefan Dušan (1331–1355) subsequently sojourned on several occasions. His successful military campaigns emboldened Dušan to proclaim himself Emperor of the Serbs and Greeks (1346). He expanded the state to the shores of the Aegean and Ionean seas, so that by the middle of the century its borders encompassed, apart from Macedonia, all of Epirus, Thessaly and Albania (except for Dyrrachium).

Dušan stayed in Prizren quite often. Prizren was a town whose character revealed, more than others, the economic advantages of its position at the crossroads of important caravan routes. Fairs were held there four times a year; merchants from coastal towns, Cattaro and Dubrovnik in particular, but also Venice, Genoa, etc., arrived from various directions, some settling permanently. Crafts and trades, particularly the production of textiles, especially silk (the silkworm was cultivated locally), were organized into guilds headed by protomasters. King, and future Emperor, Dušan, also resided in this thriving town because he was having the monastery of the Holy Archangels raised in its vicinity, in the Bistrica Valley. Within the monastery confines was a large church in which he wished to be buried. This, however, was not the first edifice of its kind in Kosovo. Before it, kings Uroš II Milutin and Stefan Dečanski had built mausolea—the churches of St. Stephen in Banjska and Christ the Pantocrator in Dečani. These churches and the complex of the Patriarchate of Peć with the Holy Apostles in its core—the resting place of the highest church dignitaries as early as the second half of the 13th century—left a distinctive mark on the architecture of the region as a whole. It was as if the example set by heads of church had inspired the Serbian kings to build monumental buildings of outstanding character where they were to rest in peace, in their new administrative center. Dušan did the same. This region signified, in a special way, his parent country, though he pushed the borders far southward in the first years of his reign, thereby stripping the territory of present-day Kosovo of its key geographical position.

Kosovo was homeland to a number of distinguished feudal families (the Musić, the Branković, the Lazarević) who continued to hold their estates, as the legacy of their ancestors, for many years. Nevertheless, the fertile soil and the ore-rich lands were largely in the possession of the rulers themselves. The endowment charters of the monasteries of Banjska, Dečani, and the Holy Archangels that have survived, attest to the fact that the sovereigns granted them enormous estates in the plains surrounded by wooded mountains, along with villages and summer pastures, thus permanently providing for the subsistence of their monastic communities. The lands of other monasteries, especially those of the Patriarchate of Peć, being added to this, it can be claimed that most of the territory of present-day Kosovo was taken by church estates. It is therefore not unusual that vast regions to the west were called Metohija, after a term of Greek origin used locally to denote monastery estates which were not immediately adjacent to the monastery (*τὰ μετόχια*).

On some of these *metochs*, as can be seen from the example of the estate of the Žiča—a monastery where the Patriarchate of Peć was to expand later on—the number of churches grew due to the monks' obligation to attend religious services. There are hundreds of village churches which are now in ruins, others the only remaining trace of which is in written sources or a surviving name—and these buildings, past and present, testify to the presence of a large population, its infrastructure and religious life for many centuries throughout Kosovo and Metohija. Along with the monasteries, town churches, and those of feudal lords, places of prayer in caves and graveyards, these places of worship comprise a dense network of shrines for which this region is often called the Holy Land. The survey of monuments at the end of the book, presented in a selective, well-documented account, sets forth only the most basic facts assembled in the field or taken from sources.

A survey of the architectural heritage including a broader overview of monuments would certainly offer a more complete picture of artistic activity, but would not provide a fuller understanding of its nature. The analysis has been therefore restricted only to the monuments which most thoroughly represent artistic ideas and realizations, starting from the simplest anachoritic cave-dwellings with places for worship, and going on to buildings raised by kings and archbishops.

Most of the survey is, nevertheless, dedicated to larger structures in which artists could express their ideas in monumental dimensions and in a most complex mode. A view, therefore, of artistic creativity within the boundaries of present-day Kosovo offers a profusion of ideas and forms. We should not, however, lose sight of the fact that early Serbian art, despite its strict compliance with the fundamental principles of the Eastern Christian church, did not adhere closely to a particular tradition or mimic established forms. Rather it was responsive to the vital styles it met with in the workshops of master craftsmen in Byzantine towns and the Adriatic coast, freely seeking for solutions suited to the views and needs of the Serbian environment.

The narrative sources which recount preparations a ruler made to endow a church for himself first draw attention to his consultations with immediate associates, frequently outlining the reasons influencing the selection of a certain patron-saint, and explaining the personal wishes of the founder as to the building's appearance. Especially interesting are the passages regarding the king's attachment to the Christian sacred buildings he wished to emulate. Writers of *Lives* were not always precise in

their descriptions, so sources of other kinds and analogies with sacred buildings in other places have enabled scholars to extrapolate the essential ideas motivating the person who commissioned the project, regarding the character of the building and its decoration. Descriptions confirm that on these issues the rulers relied on spiritual advisers, the most prominent of whom in the first half of the 14th century was Danilo II (1325–1337). The final appearance of each church was decided in consultation with artists who set out their proposals in accordance with their experience and the practice fostered in the region where they came from. These certainly gave each building a particular flavor, especially in the sculptural articulation of the whole and in façade ornamentation. In that sense, the rulers in Kosovo, as was the case earlier in Raška in the Ibar valley, gladly embraced western architectural patterns, adapting them—primarily in the design of the dome and the spatial components in which the services were carried primarily in the design of the dome and the spatial components in which the services were carried out—to the Orthodox ritual.

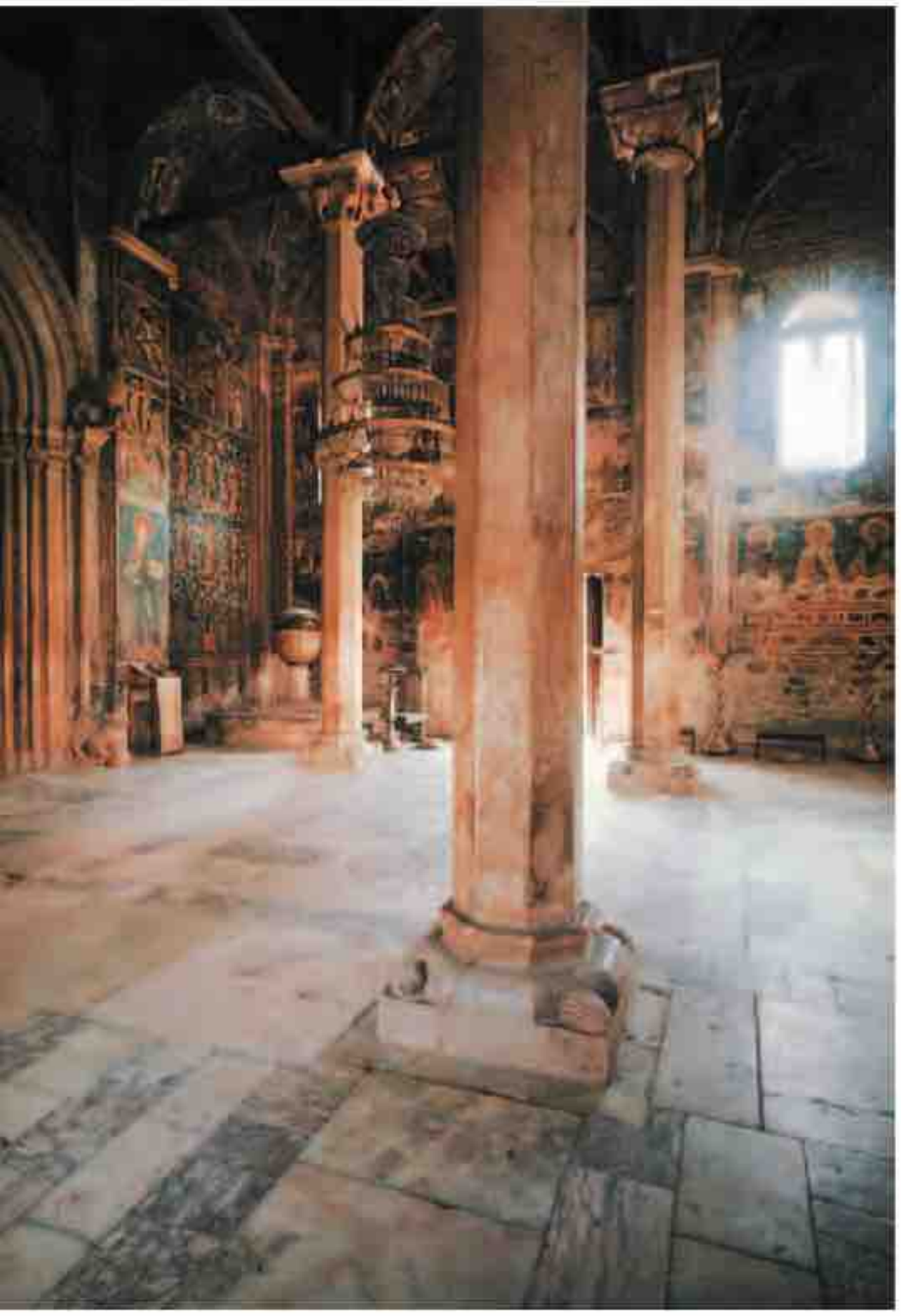
The strict artistic concepts of the Serbian clergy found more consistent expression in wall and icon painting. Western artistic experience and iconography of the western world were far less likely to penetrate their closed system. The character of sacred paintings and their meaning in the tenor of the views of the Eastern Church is discernible in small shrines with abbreviated iconographic content, while in the spacious interiors of larger buildings, where surfaces serve an overlay of meanings and functions, one can find developed, thematically connected sequences of compositions with manifold messages, frequently comprehensible only to those versed in theology. Intricate concepts translated into visual language had a long tradition in the art of the Byzantine sphere, and in medieval Serbia, its significant segment, this was best evidenced in the Kosovo churches. The frescos were the work of both local and foreign masters, and their learned advisers. Their contribution is most tangible in the wealth of historical depiction and the individual portraits of Serbian rulers, noblemen, church dignitaries and monks. Special among them are portraits of the members of the house of Nemanjić in the form of a family tree—an exuberant vine with foliage interwoven with their· images like the Tree of Jesse. These compositions appeared for the first time in Kosovo where three of four such representations have survived.

The fortunate circumstance that a number of large monastic buildings still stand well preserved, can be explained by the fact that advanced building techniques were employed to raise them. They were invariably sturdier structures than other buildings of the period. Furthermore, they were maintained and restored with greater care—the Patriarchate of Peć being a most telling instance—both in the decades when the spiritual life was declining after the fall of Serbia (1459), and after the restoration of the Patriarchate of Peć (1557) which prolonged the existence of the Serbian church and creative activity in its fold until the time of the Great Migration of Christians into northern regions across the Sava and the Danube (1690).

The Incredulity of Thomas, Church of the Holy Apostles, south wall of the naos, the Patriarchate of Peć, ca. 1260

This tangible distinction between the well-preserved churches on the one hand, carefully built in stone, and the ruins of fortified towns on the other, once housing the royal court which were constructed using rather more modest materials, moved an anonymous poet to praise the devotion of rulers who spent their riches on endowed churches[5] rather than on palaces in the poem "Where did the treasure of King Nemanja vanish?" Milutin, as we have said, resided in smaller fortresses and adjacent towns; no

[5] The specific term *zadužbina*, or endowed church, denotes in Serbian a building erected *za dušu* (for one's soul).



Dečani, view of the narthex

The spacious interior of the Dečani narthex is separated by four slender columns into sections. The narthex is tripartite, somewhat lower and narrower than the nave. The church was built on marble slabs in three colors. Its sophisticated architecture harmoniously blends the western, Romanesque, and Gothic movements with the eastern, Byzantine style, keeping the tradition of the Serbian arts.

ruins have, to date, been discovered which would suggest that he led a lavish lifestyle.

The descriptions provided here are not consistent in proportion to each building's size and the opulence of its icons and frescos. Whole chapters could be devoted to single extensive cycles, as in the case of churches like Dečani, but such a focus would go beyond the scope of this volume. Here we intend to depict, by means of a specific selection, the nature of creative activity in Kosovo, primarily its monumental aspects—architecture, sculpture and fresco. In time, the appearance of church interiors altered: they were lavishly embellished with candelabra and choroses, icons on the altar screens and proskynetaria, gold and silver vessels, vestements of priests, curtains, epitaphioi and other fabrics, most frequently embroidered with gold and silver, and then analogia in wood--carving and intarsia, thrones and other church furnishings. A part of these objects is now held in collections whose existence is only noted here. Preservation of a building, in most cases its frescos, over centuries of Ottoman rule, is sketched in broad outline. An occasional illustration or incidental reference will nevertheless conjure for the reader the former opulence of the interior, best evoked in the ambience of the church of Christ the Pantocrator in Dečani.

Countless Kosovo shrines are in ruins or they have vanished serving as sacrificial offerings toward the preservation of the larger buildings which have survived all subsequent turmoils. These enduring monuments in the lands known as Serbia sacra are the result of the far-seeing need of the autonomous Christian state and church to master the transience of human destiny with a sense of permanence. Referring in specific to the artistic and spiritual heritage of Kosovo, Andre Malraux, author of *The Metamorphosis of Gods* said: "Culture, when it is the most precious possession, is never the past" (*Revue des études slaves* LVI [Paris 1984] 466).

The Sacred Land: Art of Kosovo,
The Monacelli Press 1997, pp. 7–14.

Countless Kosovo shrines are in ruins or they have vanished, serving as sacrificial offerings toward the preservation of the larger buildings which have survived all subsequent turmoils.

The Glory of Byzantium and the grandeur of Serbia

"Roman statecraft, Greek culture, and Christian belief are the three wellheads of Byzantine development. If any of these three had been missing, Byzantium as we know it could not have existed. It was only the synthesis of Hellenistic culture and the Christian religion with Roman governmental forms which could have caused that historical phenomenon, known as the Byzantine state, to arise" (G. Ostrogorsky).

It is said that Emperor Justinian (482–565) was born in present-day Kosovo in Ulpiana (today Lipljan, close to beautiful Gračanica). During his reign the Serbs had started moving down to Byzantium—certainly to be baptized, in God's wise and saving providence. They then learned and acquired much of what Justinian bequeathed to them from the Illyricum, that is, today's troubled region but still the cradle of Europe: the Balkans. During the Great Migration of Indo-European peoples, the Serbs finally settled in the area of present-day Kosovo and Metohija in the seventh century and soon thereafter became Christianized joining the Christian civilization of Orthodox Byzantium. Attesting to this is the existence of over 1,300 churches and monasteries, especially near Prizren, Peć, Istok, Klina, Mt. Čičavica, Novo Brdo, and the region of Pomoravlje. Among the pious endowments in Kosovo and Metohija are several important religious, cultural, and historical monuments, such as the Patriarchate of Peć, Visoki Dečani, Gračanica, and Bogorodica Ljeviška, unique in the world's spiritual and cultural heritage.

The best churches in Orthodox Serbia constitute a eulogy of Hagia Sophia, the Church of Churches—of the Holy Wisdom of God in Constantinople, which is beyond all philosophies and philosophers, all architectures and architects, as an image and type of the Church—Ship of Christ. Blessed are they who have selected this Church-Ship, "the boat of Christ which will never sink," as St. John Chrysostom (4th century) would preach from the ambo which still stands in front of Hagia Sophia today. Beauty will be dead, untrue, if the mystery of the Body, the sacrifice of Christ, the House of Bread, Bethlehem, outside of which there is neither salvation nor eternal life, is not incarnated in it. And the Hagia Sophia has remained a model for all the churches of God, throughout the world and throughout the centuries.

In Byzantium, Sava Nemanjić managed to secure autocephaly for the Serbian Church and became the first Serbian archbishop in 1219. In the same year Sava published the first constitution in Serbia—St. Sava's *Nomocanon*. This legal act was the compilation of Civil law, based on Roman Law, Canon law, and the Ecumenical Councils. Its basic purpose was to organize functioning of the young Serbian

Church of Saint Sophia in Constantinople (Istanbul)

kingdom and the Serbian church. The Medieval Serbian Empire rose from Byzantine patronage. There is a tendency which wishes to showcase the Serbian conceptual system as indigenous, even though it is not, for Serbs have been nurtured by the Iliad and the Odyssey and the classics—otherwise one cannot explain why Plato, Plutarch, the Ethiopian prophetess Sibylla and others, are portrayed on the northern arch of the Cathedral of Ljeviša—as well as Byzantine philosophers, the Fathers of the Church.

The Nemanjić dynasty left to Serbia masterpieces of religious art combining Byzantine, Western, and local styles. Serbia's sophisticated architecture harmoniously blends the eastern, Byzantine style, with the western, Romanesque and Gothic movements, keeping the tradition of the Serbian arts. Serbia dominated the Balkans under Stefan Dušan (1331–55). He proclaimed himself emperor, and wrote a new legal code combining Byzantine law with Serbian customs.

Remaining to testify about Kosovo and Metohija as the center of the ecclesial, governmental, and social authority of "all Serbian countries" are not only the magnificent temples of monasteries Dečani, Gračanica, The Mother of God of Ljeviša, and of the Peć Patriarchate, preserved until our day, but also the imposing ruins of the churches such as Asceterion of Peter of Koriša, The Mother of God of Hvosno, the Holy Archangels, Banjska, Novo Brdo, Zvečan, Ubožac, Ajnovac, and tens of our other rulers' and feudal lords' pious endowments (foundations) from the 13th and 14th centuries. Some of these monuments rank among the highest artistic creations of the Christian civilization. Yet, these landmarks and historical sights were never the only ones; they were followed by hundreds of rural churches, monasteries and temples which represented (and partly some others as well) a firm foundation in the evolution of our culture and arts.

Even when Serbia had fallen under the Ottoman yoke, good artistic work was still produced, although it lacked the brilliance of that done before about 1320. It is the paintings of the earlier period that constitutes the true glory of the Serbian contribution to the story of art.

Constantinople—a composite view of the 6th to the 11th centuries,
painting by Jean-Léon Huens (1921–1982), from *National Geographic*, December 1983

Serbia's Monuments in Kosovo and Rascia (Raška)

Alex Dragnich and Slavko Todorovich

Visiting the territories of former Rascia (Raška) and Kosovo, one encounters many visible landmarks that are witnesses to Serbia's medieval grandeur. An extensive discussion of these art monuments is beyond the scope of this study. Rather, in this brief chapter some of the surviving monuments will be examined as documents of Serbia's cultural legacy in Kosovo and adjoining areas.

Serbia's (Raška's) opportunity to firmly establish its cultural presence in the Byzantine-dominated Balkans came with Serbia's methodical consolidation of her rise as a political power under a single and powerful leader. This evolution in Serbia's medieval history was particularly active in the latter half of the 12th century, when the Latin West, led by the Venetians, struck against Byzantium during the Fourth Crusade and finally sacked Constantinople in 1204. Serbia was thus presented with circumstances favorable to the advance of its own political and religious cause, due in no small part to the divisions within the Byzantine Empire, divisions that lasted until the restoration of the empire in 1261 under the Palaeologan dynasty.

Nemanja, the founder of Serbian medieval statehood, deserves the credit for not missing the chance to advance the Serbian cause politically, and his son Sava was equally responsible for expanding Serbia in the realm of culture and art. Nemanja was certainly aware of the need for a strong Serbian political unit that required cultural manifestations that could easily be identified with the Serbian people. The choice of Sava to implement these political and cultural plans was not accidental. As a politically astute leader, Nemanja knew that the great centers of Constantinople and Thessalonika in the east, and his own Zeta littoral in the west, were culturally rich but stylistically diverse regions. Byzantium abounded in artists of every kind, while the coast of Zeta provided stone masons of unparalleled skills. But it was only under the generous patronage of the members of the Nemanjić dynasty, and above all under the sage and brilliant guidance of Sava, that these two different artistic outlooks could be united to produce from old tradition-bound forms new and creative combinations that could easily be identified as the art style of Raška.

Sava, a Mount Athos monk, scholar, and theologian trained in Hilandar Monastery, was eminently prepared to build the foundations upon which a national culture would grow within the religious environment of Eastern Orthodoxy. As a man of his time, a diplomat above all, serving his newly-born state, he had the opportunity to know most of the leading figures of the era—from emperors sitting on the various thrones of segmented Byzantium to the heads of Churches and spiritual leaders of monastic communities from Nicaea and Jerusalem to the shores of the Adriatic and beyond. In his travels he became acquainted with architecture and religious art in the churches and monasteries throughout Byzantium and all the way to the Holy Land.

Sava learned from the treasured stores of knowledge safeguarded in monastic libraries. He must have known personally many of his contemporary learned authors and theologians, either as friends or adversaries. He was able to commission from Constantinople works by some of the most outstanding painters of that period. Never again in its history would Serbia have a son of his stature and impact. He was the youngest member of the family, whose father was to follow in his footsteps as a monk, and whose ruling brothers would listen to and heed his advice.

Abroad, the Byzantines were distrustful of him (the Greek archbishop of neighboring Ohrid anathematized him when he succeeded in gaining autocephaly for the Serbian Church), but still needed him. The Bulgarians revered him, while the papal alliance avoided dealing with him.

When the Byzantines and the Latins were dividing the Balkans, Sava made sure that the dividing line did not go through Rascia. He was determined to withstand Roman Catholic religious pressures, and to establish Orthodoxy as a national faith, and through translated liturgical services to give it a Serbian character.

These unique geo-political circumstances had a lasting impact upon the evolving Serbian cultural manifestations, the surviving remains of which can readily be seen not only in the former lands of Raška and Kosovo, but even and beyond Nemanja, who did not want to be remembered by castles or fortresses but by churches, and Sava proved to be a magnificent combination: a pragmatic father to construct a viable frame and a sophisticated and artistically sensitive son to fill it with relevant content. Above all, Nemanja and Sava set a precedent to be followed by the other members

of the Nemanjić dynasty, their noblemen, and high clergy—the end result being untold artistic and cultural riches, the pride of the Serbian nation to this very day.

One of the early structures sponsored by Nemanja was dedicated to a military saint, Saint George, and placed as a proud symbol on a tall promontory overlooking Nemanja's capital city of Ras. It was a single nave, domed structure and its twin-towered entrance gave it the popular name *Djurdjevi Stupovi* (1170–1171). This church was sumptuously decorated (1175) by an outstanding but anonymous artist. Due to military and other calamities, the frescos survived only in small fragments (recently the structure was restored and roofed). In spite of the losses of painted surfaces, the entire iconographic schema is clear—a lower zone of standing saints; two zones of compositions from the life of Christ; and in the dome the image of the Lord in bust.

An addition to the painted program of Djurdjevi Stupovi was provided by Nemanja's great grandson, King Dragutin in 1282–1283. Most interesting for Serbian history is the painted program of the ground floor chapel, under the entrance tower, created as a burial place for Dragutin himself. Here one sees the members of the Nemanjić dynasty, from founder onward (with their wives) in ceremonial procession approaching the Enthroned Christ. In the groin vault covering this chapel there can be seen, as a permanent document for posterity, four illustrated events: Nemanja as Monk Simeon relinquishing his throne in favor of his son Stefan; the enthronement of Uroš I as king of Serbia; Dragutin's assumption of the throne; and finally, his relinquishing the throne in favor of his brother Milutin.

Nemanja's laying of religious foundations was more than an artistic endeavor. It served political and religious purposes, but it was above all aimed at the salvation of his soul. To house his own crypt, Nemanja built a monastery (1183–1191), well-hidden in the canyon of a swift tributary of the Ibar River, to which he gave the name *Studenica*. It is to this site that Nemanja withdrew from ruling duties to become Monk Simeon, living there for over a year and a half before going to Mount Athos.

The Church of the Virgin, the center of this monastic complex, later served as a prototype for several other churches destined to be burial places of Serbian kings. While the frescos in the church are typically Byzantine and the marble portals and their sculptures and reliefs Romanesque, the parts taken together bear the imprint of the Serbian spirit. After the transfer of Nemanja's remains from Mount Athos to Studenica, Byzantine painters were engaged to decorate the walls of the church (1209). Most likely, Sava helped plan the iconographic program, and most certainly gave instructions about historical personages to be included. Although the painter left an inscription in Greek at the base of the dome (now only partially preserved), all other inscriptions throughout the church are in Serbian, written in large and beautifully formalized letters, undoubtedly under the explicit influence of Sava.

To the original church a large outer narthex was added in third or fourth decade of 13th century, certainly before 1234. Here, too, fragments of fresco paintings are preserved. Among the more significant ones are those in the south chapel, where one finds the oldest preserved historical compositions with specifically Serbian subjects, which together with the religious scenes indicate that they were inspired directly by Sava's writing. The historical events deal with the transfer of Simeon's relics from Mount Athos to Studenica. Also present are the dynastic portraits, from the founder to King Radoslav carrying the model, indicating that he was the donor of this addition to the Church of the Virgin.

To the south of the church stands a much smaller structure, the so-called King's Church, built by Nemanja's great grandson, King Stefan Milutin. This powerful and wealthy ruler of Serbia for almost forty years reputedly built or renovated a church for every year of his reign. Some say that this number is exaggerated, but the numerous religious structures still standing throughout Serbian lands, and even reaching to Jerusalem and Constantinople, are historical testimony to King Milutin's generosity.

The King's Church, dedicated to Joachim and Anna, with a small, single nave and domed, was decorated in or around the year 1313/14. The total iconographic program is relatively well-preserved. In the opinion of scholars, the quality of the preserved frescos is the best of this period outside Constantinople. Besides representations of the twelve liturgical feasts, saints and prophets, and cycles from the life of Christ, there are dynastic portraits from Nemanja and Sava to King Milutin (holding a model of the chapel) and his child queen, Byzantine Palaeologan Princess Simonida. Although this tiny monument endured much destruction over the centuries, a part of the king's inscription remains and reads: "...whoever alter this let him be cursed by God and sinful me, amen." The long dead king still seems to be guarding the small foundation.

Djurdjevi Stupovi Monastery, Church of Saint George, 12th century

Sopoćani Monastery, Holy Trinity Church, 13th century

Following the example of the founder of the dynasty, the sons, grandsons, and other descendants continued building churches throughout Serbian-held lands. All of these structures, with their plans, elevations, and artistic embellishments, are grouped together into a stylistic unit known as the Raška School, being distinctly different from other Serbian schools, such as the Morava School to the east and the Zeta School to the west. Raška and Kosovo were at that time a single political and cultural entity. As all things in medieval society, churches had their hierarchical order. Famous and venerated as it was, the Studenica Monastery was not the first-ranked church among Serbian-built religious structures, since it was not planned as the see of a Serbian archbishop.

The Church of the Ascension of Christ in the Žiča Monastery, built by Sava and his brother Stefan (after 1207), was perceived as the "Mother of Serbian Churches," and eventually became the coronation church of Serbian kings, beginning with Stefan the First Crowned. As mentioned by Sava's biographer, Theodosius, Sava brought with him the builders and marble workers "from the Greek land." For the painted decoration of this church, executed about 1220, Sava brought painters directly from Constantinople.

It is surprising that Sava, who took care of the planning and execution of so many of the early Nemanja structures, did not build his own resting place. Nemanja's grandson, King Vladislav, buried Sava in the famous church of the Ascension of Christ in his own Mileševa Monastery. This domed building of the Raška style was erected near Prijepolje probably just before the year 1218/19. At that time it was decorated with frescos, whose artists tried to emulate the noted Byzantine mosaic technique. From this church comes some of the most beautifully painted images that have been preserved in the entire corpus of Serbian medieval paintings. Among them is the elegant and serene figure of the Virgin from the Annunciation.

In 1236, King Vladislav brought the body of his venerated uncle to this church. Sava died in Trnovo (Bulgaria) a year earlier, while on yet another diplomatic mission, this time successfully to negotiate autocephalic status for the Bulgarian Orthodox Church. It was a difficult task for the Serbian king to bring Sava's body to his native land. Sava was so venerated in Bulgaria that Vladislav's father-in-law, the "fearless" Tsar Asen II, lacked the courage to let Sava's earthly remains be taken out of the country, fearing the rage of the local population. Some popular tradition has it that Vladislav literally stole the body of his uncle and brought it to Mileševa. Actually, he had permission from the tsar, but to avoid possible incidents the body was removed secretly. Some years later, Vladislav was also buried there.

The tomb of Sava, the first Serbian archbishop, became one of the venerated places for the Serbs. Even after his death, he had a special role in the life of his nation and its rulers. In the 14th century, Bosnian King Tvrtko I crowned himself king of Serbia on Sava's grave, an act obviously full of significance. Another nobleman, Stjepan Vukčić, assumed on the tomb of Sava the title of "Herceg [heir] of Saint Sava."

The Ottomans burned Mileševa in 1459, but the church building survived. Some 150 years later, the Islamized Albanian from Prizren, Grand Vizier Sinnan Pasha, campaigning in Hungary and dissatisfied with the behavior of Serbian homesteaders, ordered Sava's body disinterred and burned on a pyre in the Vračar area of Belgrade. The Serbian Orthodox Church declared this youngest son of Nemanja a national saint.

In the period between 1544–1557, the Mileševa Monastery became a "publishing house," printing on its own presses numerous liturgical books. The popularity of these productions among the Slavs was considerable, and some reached as far as Russia. In return, some gifts were sent from Russia to the monastery. For example, still preserved in the monastic treasury is a chalice donated by Tsar Ivan the Terrible in 1558. Mileševa had its own school where Serbian children learned to read. Among the pupils was a youngster later taken by the Ottomans into the janissary corps, the renowned Mehmed Pasha Sokolović, who subsequently rose to the rank of grand vizier in Constantinople.

Twice more, in 1689 and 1782, the Ottomans set fire to the monastery. Its turbulent history has left its scars especially strongly on the fresco surfaces. Yet, it has one of the most beautiful and moving frescos of Serbian medieval art, a detail of a larger composition, the "White Angel," still resplendent in its majestic presence.

Another Serbian monastery, *Sopoćani*, was chosen by King Stefan Uroš I as the site of his final resting place. Hidden among the gently rolling hills in the heartland of the Serbia of the Nemanjić dynasty, it lies near the ancient capital of Ras and the source of the river Raška. Its horizon is dominated by the above mentioned Djurdjevi Stupovi. In some ways it matched its founder's nature, a diffident and demure king, rather spartan in life philosophy and thoroughly unglamorous. Dedicated to the Holy Trinity, Sopoćani was built about the year 1265. Soon after its construction, King Uroš brought the body of his father, Stefan the

Mileševa Monastery, Church of the Ascension of Christ, 13th century

First Crowned, to be buried there. Subsequently, when King Uroš died in exile in Hum, his body was brought to Sopoćani. Also interred there is King Uroš' mother, Anna Dandolo, the granddaughter of Enrico Dandolo, the doge of Venice. The death of this Serbian queen is one of the most important historical compositions preserved on the walls of Serbian medieval churches.

Architecturally, Sopoćani follows the tradition of the Raška school, but the chapels used for burials make it appear as a standard three-nave basilica. Sopoćani suffered greatly from natural and war disasters, partially destroying but never diminishing the beauty of its fresco decoration. Scholars are still debating the origin of Sopoćani's master painters. Among them was one great but anonymous artist who painted the central area under the dome, as well as some of the standing figures. His brilliant work was among the most outstanding in all of Europe at that time.

As in Mileševa, the walls are painted in yellow, with coverings in gold leaf (now long lost) in order to emulate the mosaic technique. All of the inscriptions are in Serbian, and some of the faces of the Serbian archbishops (painted in liturgical procession in the apse) convey a feeling of the presence of living persons. Besides the religious compositions, there are numerous representations of scenes related to the Nemanjić dynasty. Many portraits of Serbian kings and their queens and princes, are seen under a benevolent image of the blessing Christ.

Earlier mention was made of King Milutin's generosity in the building of churches and monasteries. If space permitted, a discussion would be included pertaining to a number of other churches built or restored by him. One especially deserves mention, the renovated Cathedral Church of Prizren, the *Virgin Ljeviška* (1307). Its brilliantly painted frescos by a group of artists who worked in Ohrid (Michael Astrapa and Euthychius) still fascinate the observer in spite of the damage inflicted by the Muslims when they converted the church into a mosque. Among the religious compositions and the individual images of various male and female saints, one can also see the members of the Nemanjić dynasty, from the founder in his monastic robes to the princes who went to serve the church and the nation in religious capacities, to the richly garbed King Milutin, in his splendor rivaling the Byzantine emperor himself.

In the vicinity of Kosovska Mitrovica, between 1313 and 1317, King Milutin renovated an older church, *Banjska* and dedicated it to Saint Stefan, the namesake of the founder of the Serbian dynasty and many other Serbian kings. This structure also belongs to the Raška school and was once richly decorated by sculptural carvings. Its frescos, however, are totally lost, and the church was greatly damaged when the Ottomans turned it into a mosque. Nevertheless, the beauty of its polychromatic walls still testifies to the past splendor of the church, which was originally planned as King Milutin's final resting place. His royal ring is still preserved, bearing the inscription: "God help him who wears it..."

The last church built by King Milutin—*Gračanica*—is certainly second to none among the Serbian masterpieces. Built until 1318, it was the see of the bishop of Lipljan, and ultimately it might have been planned as the final resting place of King Milutin. It is architecturally different from the previously discussed Raška school of architecture. Its master builders did not have a Romanesque stylistic orientation; rather they turned to Byzantine architecture as the source of inspiration. The church itself is a cross-in-square plan, preceded by an open narthex, and surmounted not by one, but by five domes: the central being the largest and those at the four corners being much smaller. The exterior walls show the so-called cloisonn—technique, in which stone blocks are enclosed by bricks set into the thick mortar beds. Impressive are the soaring heights of the church, and the mysteriously lit complex interior spaces, still covered in their entirety by an almost intact fresco ensemble.

Among the standing saints and Christological compositions are the scenes of the Last Judgment (covering the entire west wall) and the portraits of King Milutin and his Byzantine-born Queen Simonida, daughter of Emperor Andronikos II. The aged king and his still young queen, splendidly dressed in their bejeweled garments, are given the crown by an angel, the messenger of God. As in the case of many paintings of saints, the eyes of Queen Simonida are dug out. This event was much later immortalized in a poem by Serbian poet and diplomat Milan Rakić, which reads in part:

"Oh, pretty image, an Albanian has dug out your eyes
With a knife when no one would see him...
But I can see, oh woeful Simonida, your long dug-out
Eyes still gleaming at me from the wall."

The names of the Gračanica painters are not known. It is a well-established fact, however, that King Milutin maintained a group of artists, whose works scholars call the Court School of King Milutin. As mentioned above, the names of some of them are known, and they came from Ohrid to work for the Serbian king. Some of these painters

The Church of the Holy Apostles Peter and Paul

Commonly known as Church of St. Peter or simply Peter's Church is a Serbian Orthodox church, the oldest intact church in Serbia and one of the oldest ones in the region, situated on a hill of Ras, the medieval capital of the Serbian Grand Principality (Rascia), near Novi Pazar, Serbia. It is part of the Stari Ras complex, an UNESCO World Heritage Site. It was founded in the 4th century during Roman rule, while additions were made in the 7th and 9th centuries, after which it served as the ecclessiastical seat of the Serbian church, and as the baptismal church and state council site of the Nemanjić dynasty, until the last years of the 12th century. The first Serbian bishopric (Diocese of Ras) was founded at the political center at Ras, near modern Novi Pazar on the Ibar river. Ras itself originates from ancient Arsa, and it is mentioned as a Serbian town in Constantine VII's *De Administrando Imperio* (r. 913–959). The church served as seat of the Serbian eparchy, as the rotunda plan is characteristic of first court chapels. The bishopric was established shortly after 871, during the rule of Prince Mutimir (850–891), and was part of the general plan of establishing bishopries in the Slav lands of the Empire, confirmed by the Council of Constantinople in 879–880.

Studenica Monastery, Church of the Mother of God, 12th century

Žiča Monastery
(the seat of the Serbian Archbishopric before moving to Peć),
Church of the Ascension of Christ, 13th century

left their signatures on their works, thus immortalizing themselves and their royal sponsor. In the sponsorship of artists, Milutin followed the tradition of his family. His mother, Queen Jelena, supported the school for embroidery arts, and undoubtedly many Serbian woman honed her skills there. Moreover, Milutin's brother, King Dragutin, also sponsored an art school specializing in applied arts and crafts.

Art historians in general, and Byzantinists in particular, have written volumes dealing with the style and iconography of Serbian frescos. In general, they agree that Serbian paintings preserved on the walls of these medieval churches constitute a continuity in Byzantine artistic expression during the period when the artistic production of Constantinople was severely curtailed due to the political situation of the empire in the late 12th and early 13th centuries. Most scholars also agree that Serbian art served as a link between the East and West, transmitting to Western artists, eager to learn and experiment, the venerable old tradition kept alive in the superior Byzantine technique of frescos and mosaics, as well as style. This was the period of the 13th and 14th centuries, when Byzantium was undergoing an artistic revival (after 1261), and just as the West was on the threshold of the classical revival, self-discovery, and renaissance. The center of Serbian Orthodox Christendom was the monastic complex at Peć, most often referred to as *the Patriarchate*. Located in the vicinity of the rugged Rugovo pass, a nightmare to any intruder, the walled monastery conveys a feeling of remoteness in a physical and spiritual sense. The need to hide was understandable in view of the fact that Žiča, exposed in the plains, was sacked on several occasions by the marauding Bulgarians, Mongols, and other passing invaders. Also, as the see, first of Serbian archbishops and later of Serbian patriarchs for three centuries, the monastery required seclusion. Many church dignitaries are buried there.

The complex itself consists of several churches, chapels, and a large outer narthex, all attached and forming an inseparable unit. The oldest is the Church of the Holy Apostles, built by Archbishop Arsenije in the period between 1235–1250. Some of the original frescos are still preserved. Especially noteworthy is the majestic representation in the dome of the Ascension of Christ. To the north, Archbishop Nikodemus added the Church of Saint Demetrius during the years 1316–1324. The fresco ensemble is almost completely preserved. The images are signed in Serbian, while the painter left a signature in Greek in the apse of the church. To the south, the famous Serbian archbishop, writer, and architect, Danilo II, in 1330 added the church dedicated to the Virgin. Among its preserved frescos are portraits of Archbishop Danilo with a model of the church, and his namesake, the Prophet Daniel.

There are other Serbian monasteries and churches (preserved or in ruins) that dot the landscape of Kosovo. Among these are Devič, Gorioč, and Lipljan. Some of these served as sources of inspiration to national bards composing verses of epic poetry, e.g. Samodreža near Priština, one of King Milutin's capitals.

Probably the most important of medieval Serbia's Kosovo cities was Prizren, Emperor Dušan's capital. In its vicinity Dušan provided for his final resting place the only structure that he had an opportunity to build as donor. The church was dedicated to the Holy Archangels. Erected between 1347 and 1352, it was one of the most magnificent of Serbian medieval royal foundations. Its grandeur was meant to match in every way Dušan's ambitions, particularly his planned conquest of Byzantium. The young emperor ordered the annual production of his silver mine at Novo Brdo to be set aside to cover the expenses of building and decorating his ambitious enterprise.

Although chronologically late, the style chosen was the Raška school. The exterior was purple and yellow marble blocks, while red stone was carefully selected for the interior. All of these colors had royal connotations. No expense was spared on the interior, resplendent in marble encrustations, gold leaf in vaults, silver stars, and lavish mosaics. A magnificent mosaic floor was in the process of execution when Dušan's sudden death resulted in bringing his body for burial there.

When the conquering Ottomans came to the region in 1455, this beautiful structure was almost completely destroyed. The conquerors ordered the building razed, and the marble blocks reused for Sinnan Pasha's mosque. The excavations between the two world wars, and after World War II, yielded a few precious fragments which attest to the church's past splendor, and some of the large foundation stones remain. In the post-World War II period, Emperor Dušan's remains were brought to Belgrade to rest in Saint Mark's Church, built in the interwar period as a large replica of Gračanica.

Katholicon of Hilandar Monastery
(Church of the Presentation of the Mother of God),
Mount Athos, Greece, 1300–1316. Photo: Slobodan Ćurčić

Serbian monastery of Hilandar (Chilandar), built in late 12th century by Stefan Nemanja and his son Rastko Nemanjić (future archbishop Sava, later St. Sava) in Mt. Athos in today's Greece was recipient of many generous gifts by the Serbian rulers and noblemen from the 12th to the 14th century. The Monastery of Hilandar obtained 96 villages from Kosovo and Metohija only, with 72 in Metohija and 24 in Kosovo. The other dependencies of Hilandar were three Vlach katuns (shepard's settlements), with circa 150 households, six churches, five monasteries, four big pastures in lower region, eleven pastures in the mountains, as well as eight vineyards and a number of apiaries and other possessions that became dependencies of monastery of Hilandar. The most generous donators were King Stefan I Nemanjić, King Uroš I Nemanjić, Emperor Stefan Dušan Nemanjić and Prince Lazar Hrebeljanović. The most rich dependencies in Kosovo were the *metochia* in Lipljan and Novo Brdo and in Drenica area, the Holy Archangels donated to Hilandar by the sebastocrator Branko Mladenović and his three sons, Roman, Grgur and Vuk Branković. In Metohija there were large dependencies from Velika Hoča, Kruševo and Prizren, up to Dobruša and Koriša area, Kosorić, etc.

Besides the Cathedral Church of the Virgin of Ljeviška, and the ruins of Dušan's church, the Serbian royal city of Prizren still guards several national treasures, such as *the Churches of Saint Nicholas, Saint Mark,* and *Ascension of Christ (the Savior's church),* dating from the 14th century, as well as a 13th century painted cave-hermitage, the Church of Peter of Koriša.

No enumeration of Serbian monasteries in Kosovo and vicinity would be complete without mentioning the majesty and serenity of the largest of all Serbian medieval churches, *the Dečani Monastery*. It was built for King Stefan Uroš III (Dečanski) between 1327 and 1335. This church, too, follows the tradition of the Raška style, although there are some elements of the Gothic. The chief architect was a Franciscan from the Serbian royal city of Cattaro, Fra Vita, who signed his name on one of the stone lintels. The names of the assistants are also known, the brothers Djordje, Dobroslav, and Nikola, all trained in the Cattaro school. The naos and the narthex frescos were completed in 1347–1348. Dečani contains more than a thousand compositions, with an estimated 10,000 painted figures. There are more than twenty biblical cycles on the walls, from Genesis to the Last Judgment. This is certainly the largest surviving iconographic complex ever created within the Byzantine sphere of influence. There are royal portraits, and an immense genealogical tree of the Nemanjić dynasty. Perhaps these frescos are too numerous to have attained the highest artistic caliber.

Tradition says that the widow of Kosovo martyr Prince Lazar, Princess Milica, gave the monastery a giant candle to be lit only when the Kosovo defeat of 1389 was avenged. In 1913, at the conclusion of the victories in the Balkan wars, King Peter I Karadjordjević lit that candle, signifying the liberation of Kosovo (Rebecca West, *Black Lamb and Grey Falcon: A Journey Through Yugoslavia,* New York, 1982, p. 985). An eyewitness insists that King Alexander Karadjordjević lit two candles on August 19, 1924. The body of the founder, King Stefan Dečanski, who is considered a martyr among Serbs, is still resting in his church.

All of these churches and monastic establishments, the religious and artistic shrines of the Kosovo region, offer obvious testimony that Kosovo was one of the ethnically strongest Serbian territories in medieval times. The foundation charters of these monasteries are among the most reliable primary sources about the population of that period, comparable to contemporary census documents. The Dečani charter, for example, lists 2,166 agricultural homesteads and 266 stock-raising properties that were deeded to the monastery. Only 44 among them can be identified as ethnically Albanian. Finally, in contrast to all of the Serbian historical monuments in Kosovo, there is not even one that is Albanian.

During the subsequent centuries, however, the ethnic picture changed dramatically. The scenes from Serbian history and the dynastic portraits of Serbian kings painted on the walls of these churches endured the flow of time. Thinned out by wars and other misfortunes, the population which venerated them did not fare so well. With these circumstances in mind, it seems appropriate to ask, could Kosovo live without a strong Serbian presence in the area? Could Kosovo continue to be immortalized through the passage of centuries only by these religious shrines and the works of art? Isolated from the people for whom they were created, are they nothing but vulnerable stones? Who brought the Albanians into Kosovo? At least some partial answers to these questions will be offered in the following pages.

Kosovo, ed. B. W. R. Jenkins,
Serbian Western American Diocese 1992, pp. 70–78.

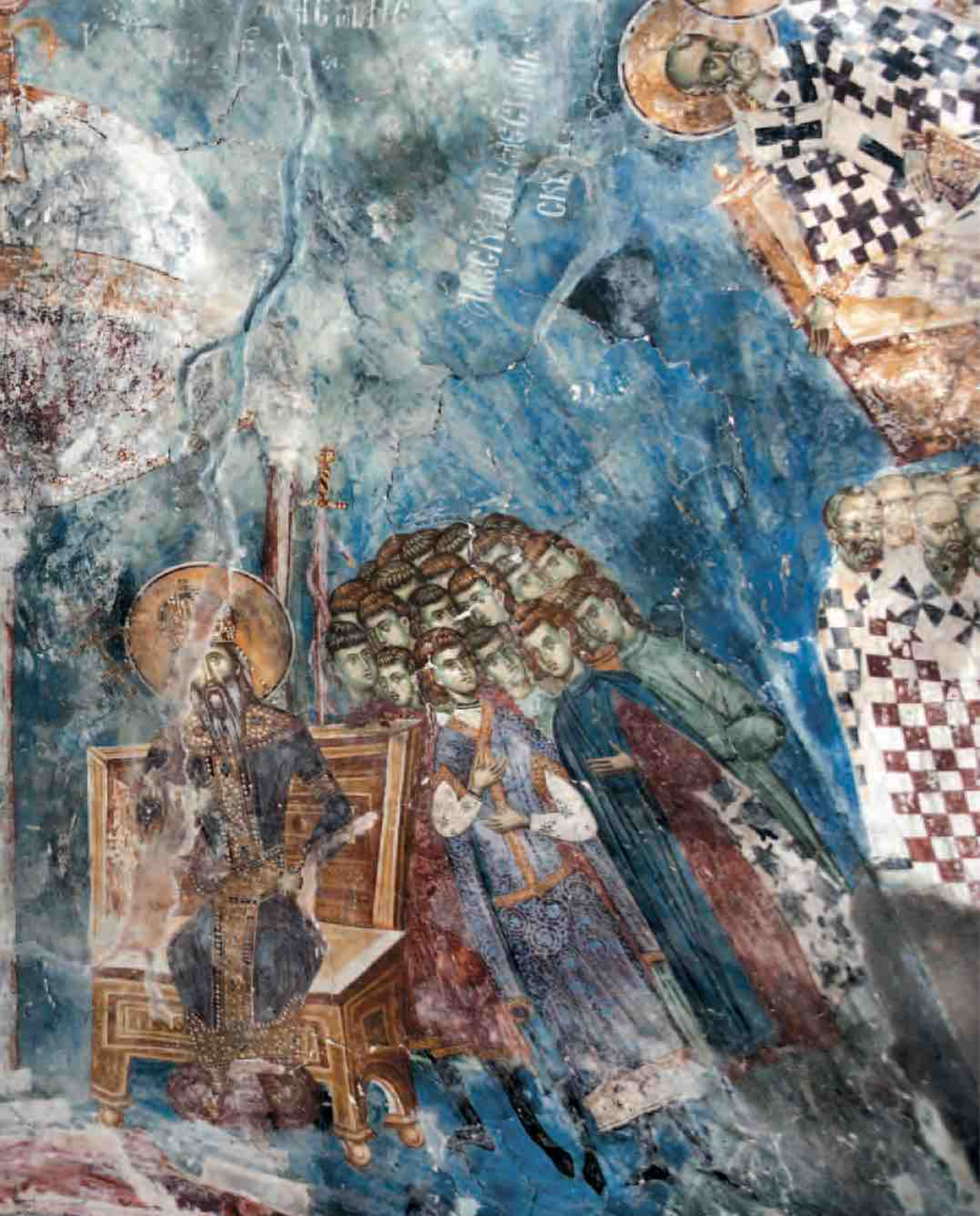
Seal of Serbian Prince Strojimir from the ninth century.
The stamp is evidence of the existence of the Serbian state in the ninth century, which is three centuries earlier than what former existing evidence have shown.

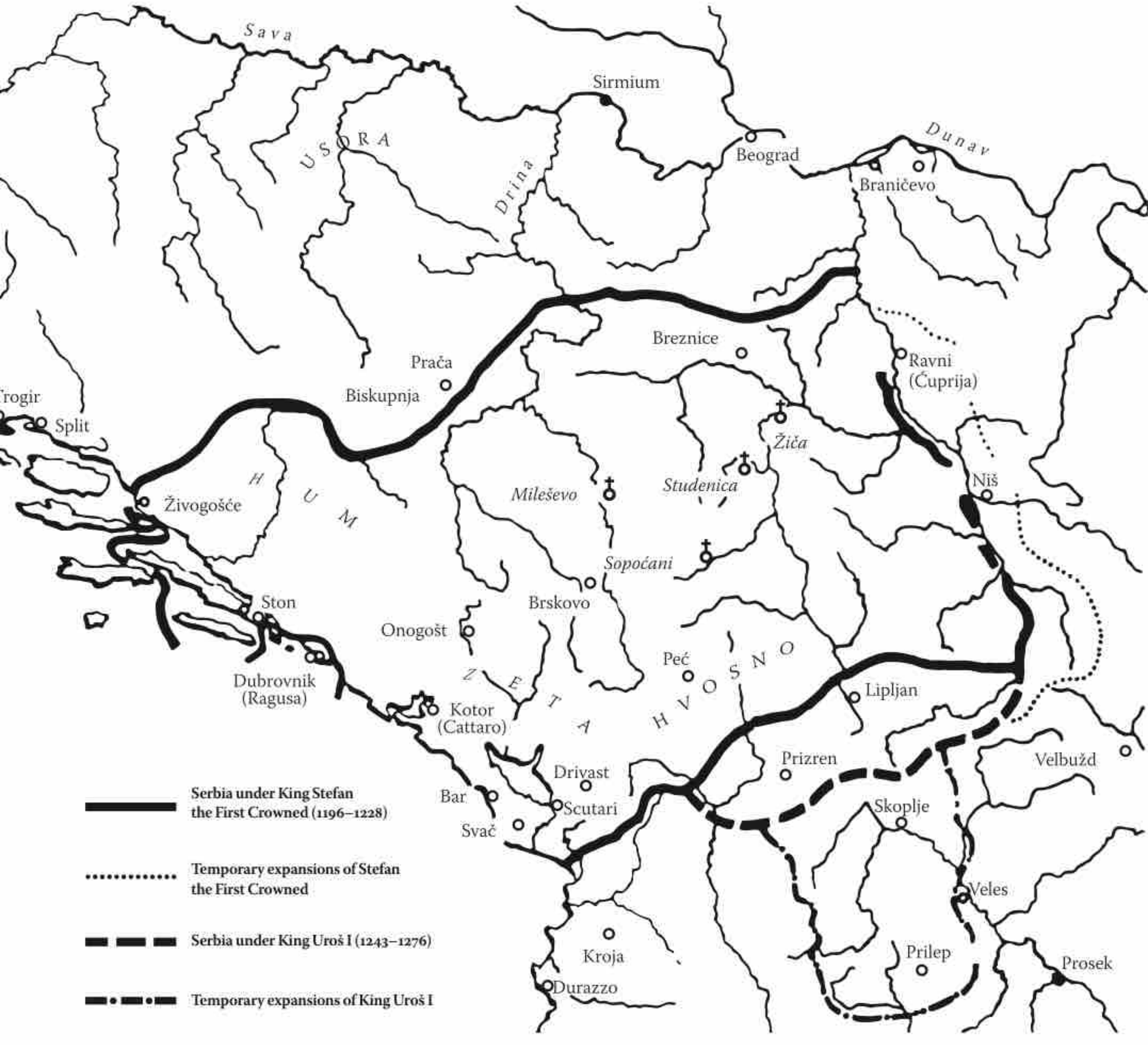
In our times, the Serbian Christian shrines in Kosovo continue to hold the attention of historians, art historians, archaeologists and conservators. A considerable number of them have been protected, and the work undertaken has brought to light new and valuable discoveries. Yet, the future of these culturally significant enterprises will depend on elementary living conditions and a readiness to put into effect international obligations contained in the convention on the protection of world cultural heritage adopted at the United Nations Conference held in Vancouver in 1976. Article no 9 reads as follows: "The right of each country is to be, with full sovereignty, the inheritor of its own cultural values which are the fruit of its history, and it is its duty to treasure them as values representing an inseparable part of the cultural heritage of mankind."

Archangel Michael, Church of Saint Demetrius,
western bay, west wall, the Patriarchate of Peć, 1322-1324

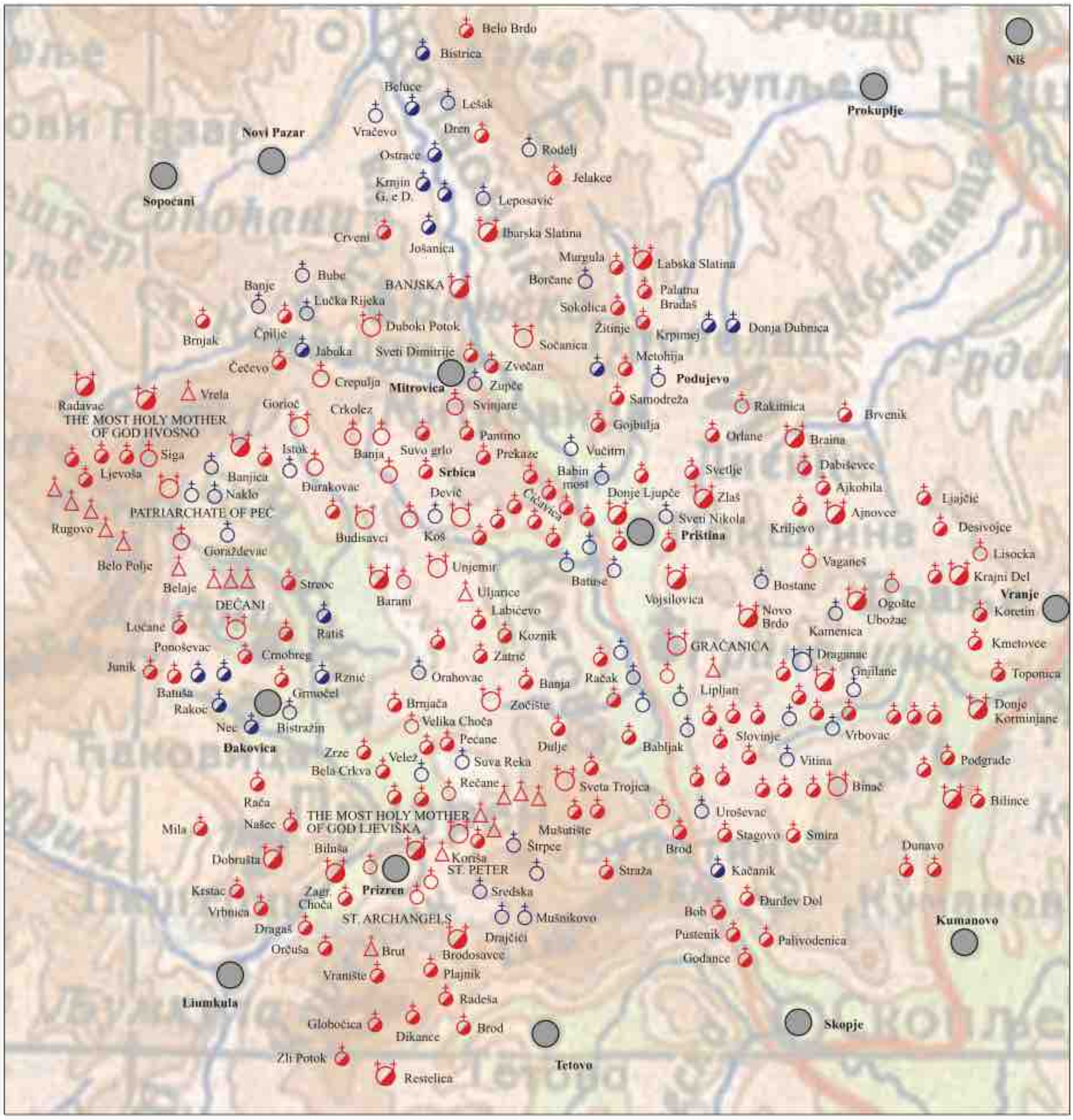
The Dormition of the Mother of God, western bay, west wall, Dečani, 1347–1348

Next page:
The Council of Saint Simeon Nemanja and King Milutin, Church of Saint Demetrius, vault of the western bay, the Patriarchate of Peć, 1322–1324





Serbia under King Stefan Nemanjić the First Crowned (1196–1228)



The significant Churches and Monasteries of Kosovo and Metohija region of the Diocese of Raška and Prizren – situation before 1999

Preserved monuments built up to 1459:

- Monasteries
- Churches

Remnants of the Monasteries and Churches built up to 1459:

- Monasteries
- Churches
- Hermitages

Monuments built after 1459 until the 20th century:

- Preserved Monasteries
- Monasteries remnants
- Preserved Churches
- Church remnants

Chronology of Serbian States Rulers and Serbian Orthodox Church Archbishops and Patriarchs

RULERS OF DIOCLEA (DUKLJA) AND ZETA

Prince Jovan Vladimir (end of 10th century–1016)
Prince Stefan Vojislav (ca. 1040–before 1055)
King Mihailo (ca. 1052–1081, king since 1077)
King Konstantin Bodin (ca. 1061–1101)

SERBIA UNDER NEMANJIĆ DINASTY

Grand Župan Stefan Nemanja,
founder of Nemanjić dynasty 1168–1196
King Stefan Prvovenčani (First-Crowned),
second son of Nemanja 1196–1227
King Radoslav, first son of Stefan 1227–1233
King Vladislav, second son of Stefan 1233–1242
King Uroš I, third son of Stefan 1242–1276
King Dragutin, elder son of Uroš I 1276–1281
King Milutin, younger son of Uroš,
brother of Dragutin 1281–1321
King Stefan Dečanski (Uroš III), son of Milutin 1321–1331
Emperor Dušan (Stefan Uroš IV),
son of Stefan Dečanski 1331–1355
Emperor Uroš V, last Nemanjić 1355–1371
Prince Lazar (Hrebeljanović) 1372–1389

DESPOTATE OF SERBIA

Despot Stefan Lazarević, son of Prince Lazar
(Prince 1389-1402, Despot 1402-1427)
Djuradj Branković, nephew of Despot Stefan 1427–1456
Despot Lazar, son of Djuradj 1456–1458
Serbia under Ottoman rule 1459–1804

RULERS OF MONTENEGRO

(center of Serbdom in 17th and 18th centuries)
Stefan(ica) Crnojević 1451–1465
Ivan (Ivanbeg) Crnojević ban 1465–1490
Djuradj Crnojević 1490–1496
Clan leaders and bishops rule
under Ottomans 1499–1697

ARCHBISHOPS OF SERBIA

Sava I 1219–1234
Arsenije I (Sremac) 1234–1263
Sava II 1263–Feb. 1271
Danilo I 1271–fall 1272
Joanikije I 1272–1276
Jevstatije I 1279–1286
Jakov 1286–1292
Jevstatije II 1292–1309
Sava III 1309–1316
Nikodim 1317–1324
Danilo II 1324-Dec. 1337

PATRIARCHS OF SERBIA

Joanikije II, archbishop
(archbishop 1338–1346, patriarch 1346–1354)
Sava IV 1354–1375
Jefrem 1375–1380/1389–1390
Spiridon 1380–Aug. 1389
Danilo III 1390–1396?
Sava V after 7.4.1396–7.10.1409?
Kiril after 7.10.1409–27.12.1418
Nikon 1419–after 1435
Nikodim II 1445–1455?
Arsenije II 1457?–1463?

SERBIAN PATRIARCHS OF PEĆ 1557–1766

Makarije (Sokolović) 1557–1571
Antonije (Sokolović) 1571–1575
Gerasim (Sokolović) 1575–1580,
1580/81–1581/82, 1586/87
Savatije (Sokolović) 1580/81, 1581/82–1585/56
Nikanor?
Jerotej 1589–1591
Filip 1591–1592
Jovan II (Kantul) 1592–1614
Pajsije (Janjevac) 1614–1647
Gavrilo I (Rajić) 1648–1655/6
Maksim 1655/6–1674
Arsenije III (Crnojević) 1674–1690
Kalinik 1691–1710
Atanasije 1711–1712
Mojsije (Rajović) 1712–1726
Arsenije IV (Jovanović Šakabenta) 1726–1737
Joanikije III Karadža (Greek) 1739–1746
Atanasije II (Gavrilović) 1746–1752
Gavrilo II 1752
Gavrilo III 1752–1758
Kirilo II (Greek) 1758–1763
Vasilije (Jovanović Brkić) 1763–1765
Kalinik II (Greek) 1765–1766

Saint Stephen the Protomartyr, Patron Saint of Serbian Medieval State and Nemanjić Family, southwestern part of the naos, Dečani

Serbia under King Milutin (1282–1321)

The Spiritual and Cultural Heritage of Serbia in Kosovo and Metohija

Gojko Subotić

Chrysobull seal of Prince Lazar, gold, 1379–1380, appended to document granting rights to the hospital of Hilandar

In the long course of its existence, Serbian art, in the Kosovo region, reached its peak in the first half of the 14th century. We focus on a limited selection of buildings here, most of which date to that period, with the aim of representing the chief stylistic currents and outlining the complexity of ideas on which their sophisticated sculptural decoration and painting rely. These shrines especially exemplify the character of artwork in surroundings exposed to simultaneous influences of Byzantium and the West. In political life, this ancient duality was displayed in the existence of two Serbian lands, Raška and Dioclea (Zeta), which from the second half of the 12th century onwards permanently united their destiny into one state. In art, these dual concepts became clearly manifested as early as the era of the state founder, the Grand župan Stefan Nemanja. The churches he raised articulated, on the one hand, characteristic features of Byzantine architectural skill, even of Constantinople masters (in all probability, St. Nicholas in Toplica), while, on the other, of Romanesque style, notable in the articulation of the marble façades and the outstanding sculpted ornamentation on the church of the Mother of God in Studenica, a level of artistic achievement which was never to be attained in later years.

During the 13th century, the Raška school of architecture produced churches of monumental dimensions and harmonious proportions, but, in terms of sculptural decoration, the simple features of their outward appearances were modestly executed in the western spirit. Elements of plastic ornamentation hardly appeared on them; the church of the Holy Apostles in Peć—for a long time the only surviving church in Kosovo invested with some importance, did not have them either. Hence, it certainly is no coincidence that no major sculptural works, typical of the towns in Dalmatia, came into existence along the southern Adriatic coast in this period.

The wife of Uroš I, Queen Helen, of French descent provided a powerful inspiration for architecture in the western spirit. When she supervised the building of the monastery of Gradac on the river Ibar around 1270, she engaged master-masons who were the first to make more extensive use of Gothic elements in construction. In the modulation of portals and windows on the main church they incorporated the appropriate sculptural repertoire. At a later time in the coastal region where she ruled after the death of her husband, Queen Helen had an Orthodox church built in the vicinity of Scutari and dedicated to St. Nicholas. She also aided the construction of a much greater number of Catholic places of worship, giving support to members of the order of St. Francis. Early sources reveal that in 1288 she consecrated Franciscan churches in monasteries in Cattaro (Kotor), Bar, Ulcinj and Scutari which echoed the characteristic appearance of religious buildings of the Umbrian-Tuscan type, with a simple, elongated space that could accommodate a large number of believers.

These ambitious ventures of Queen Helen were also aided by her sons. A well-preserved inscription from 1290 states that with kings Dragutin and Milutin she had the church of Sts Sergius and Bakchos built near Scutari on the bank of the Bojana; this church was subsequently worn away by the river. With her sons dressed in royal robes and herself clad in monastic attire she is depicted praying to St. Nicholas who blesses her in the famous icon of Sts Peter and Paul which she presented to their church in Rome.

Despite the fact that she had assumed the Orthodox monastic habit, the Dowager—Queen lavishly aided monasteries of her earlier religious denomination. Milutin did the same at a later time: an inscription from 1318 relates to his merits, probably in the renewal of the Benedictine church near Scutari. By protecting his Catholic subjects, the king evidently adhered to the practice of religious tolerance cherished in his country.

Of buildings erected by Catholic, not to speak of Orthodox, inhabitants of mining settlements for their religious needs, examples worthy of attention are the fragments still standing of a church dedicated to the Mother of God in Novo Brdo, and of St. Peter's in Stari Trg in Trepča the former, like Dečani and churches along the coastal region, was built of alternate layers of red and white stone,

while the base of the latter church, three-aisled with semi-circular apses on the east side, indicates that its central part was domed as were cathedrals in Cattaro and Dubrovnik (before the great earthquake in 1667). Hence, each in its own way—i.e. in terms of construction method, dome design—was associated with Orthodox architecture in Kosovo.

Revived architectural activity in coastal towns was most certainly connected with their masters' engagement in building projects in Kosovo. Their role was especially conspicuous in the erection of sepulchral churches. It was perceivable, in some details at least, in other structures as well, even those which were typical specimens of the new, Byzantine style. Artists arrived here travelling along the valley of the Drim River, by the road linking Prizren directly with the region of Scutari and further on, by land and by sea, with other towns along the Adriatic coast.

Masters from Byzantine workshops came at invitation from rulers from the northern lands of the Empire, and with local artists they fostered a style which was to become typical for Serbian surroundings, particularly in terms of fresco-painting. Painting belonged to the inviolable sphere of Orthodox art, within which no concessions were made in Serbia. The complete and absolute acceptance of its iconographic expression, connected with growing religious needs, rendered it possible for masters from local workshops, skillful and experienced, to respond to the high requirements posed by the court. Before becoming king, Stefan Dečanski had ruled over Zeta for some time, and there he had become acquainted with the Mediterranean ambience and the spirit of Western art. After that, under the Byzantine Emperor's surveillance, he spent seven years in his capital whose edifices—erected in the course of its thousand-year history—must have impressed him deeply not only by their size and manner of construction, but also by the opulence of their interiors. His intimate knowledge of ancient places of worship and the ruler's court must have also had an impact on Dušan, who, as a boy, sharing the fate of banishment with his father, acquired his education in Constantinople. It is not simple nowadays to assess the contribution of local artists working either alone in the same spirit, or with masters educated in centers where stylistic expression was constantly changing and representations were gradually becoming an increasingly complex manifestation of theological interpretation.

In medieval Serbia within its narrower borders—preceding Stefan Dušan's conquests—the character of painting displayed fewer differences in comparison to the leading stylistic currents in the Byzantine Empire than was the case in some of its other regions with their own local traditions. The reason for this is simple. Serbian rulers and the high clergy, in constant and close touch with larger cities, especially Thessalonica, invariably summoned from their workshops the best artists who represented the latest trends in art and, moreover, directly participated in its transformation. In this connection, it is but sufficient to examine the ascent of wall-painting in the last decade of King Milutin's rule (†1321): frescos adorning the walls of all the ruler's endowments dating from this period are the creation of the renowned painters from Thessalonica, Michael Astrapas and Eutychius, or the masters from a very close artistic circle. The uncertainty of experts as to whether the frescos bearing no surviving signatures should be attributed to these Thessalonian artists, known by names, confirms in the best possible manner the unity of spirit and the recognizable kinship of expression, which from the end of the 13th century could be followed from Mt. Athos, through Ohrid, to Peć, Prizren and Gračanica.

Local artists who worked with famous foreign masters left no information about themselves, nor did the specific features of their creations distinguish them even at a later time when their participation was confirmed by signatures. A telling instance of this is the case of two great painters from the end of the 14th and the beginning of the 15th centuries, Metropolitan Jovan and his brother Makarije, famous for their works in Pelagonija, and in Serbia, in the Morava basin. Their creations, not only in terms of value, but also in style, closely resembled those produced by the most significant masters of that epoch, whose similar works are encountered even in faraway Cyprus. In the epoch of Stefan Dečanski and Dušan, the painting heritage of the first decades of the 14th century was evolved by domestic artists, engaged in the construction of both large and small sized churches in Serbia. This is best perceived in the painting of the spacious church of Christ Pantocrator in Dečani which took ten years to complete. Several groups of artists gathered there. They readily responded to the challenge posed by the complex and, in terms of volume, the richest subject-matter in the Byzantine world. The value of their work was in no way inferior to that of artists coming from other corners of the Empire. The remains of frescos in the formerly grand Holy Archangels, only several years younger than Dečani, show the hand of the same or related painters; a similar manner of work has been discerned in other churches as well. Furthermore, direct analogies of the large fresco-sequences could not be found in Byzantium at that time; nether s t possible, as it is in the time of King Milutin, to determine their roots in the centers in which they had been previously noted. Financial wealth and increasing requirements obviously brought about the rise of local workshops. These workshops, like others all over the East-Christian world, were, understandably, always in touch with life in the capital and other towns of the Empire.

In large enterprises, apart from the participation of local artists, a significant role belonged to the leading personalities of the Serbian Church, educated and widely cultured. Their involvement in the erection and adornment of monuments is revealed by documents, primarily endowment charters, as well as writings belonging to different literary genres. It was noticeable not only in the making of decisions concerning the appearance of a structure, the

The Visitation—The Virgin Mary and Saint Elizabeth,
Church of the Mother of God Hodegetria, diaconicon, the Patriarchate of Peć, ca. 1335

choice of artists and iconography, but also in the process of finding the most appropriate articulation for ecclessiastical and political ideas. The multitude of historical compositions and effigies of members of the ruling house, the nobility, high clergy and monks, most frequently in the role of founders, reflects the life and understanding of medieval Serbian society. The inscriptions accompanying them accurately record the historical moment and disclose the ambitions of the sovereign, sometimes of a short duration in a changing political reality. In that, painters, even those who came from other countries, displayed a developed sense of careful attention to the spirit of the artistic environment and the requests of those who commissioned the work. In that aspect, the shrines in Kosovo have preserved the wealth of their uniqueness. In contrast to representations of saints whose images were entrenched in traditional Orthodox iconography, historical portraits, especially those of men, portrayed the person's original facial features in the majority of cases, meticulously registering the character of their clothes and attributes of their social status. St. Simeon and St. Sava, the founders of the autonomous state and church, were regular features on frescos, as were expressions of complex state and legal ideas, the emphasis always being placed on the divine origin of rule.

The representations of founders took a special place in churches which they raised for their eternal rest. In Kosovo, however, such images have survived only in Dečani, in a number not registered elsewhere: the first founder, Stefan Dečanski, got four, and the second, Dušan, even five portraits, each in a different iconographic version, invested with a special message. The lost depictions of King Milutin in Banjska, and of Dušan in the Holy Archangels, were undoubtedly particular paraphrases of the same ideas. The latter, as it has been shown, had two—in Serbian art unique—ruling portraits carved in stone, above the entrance to the church and over the tomb itself.

Serbian kings of the first half of the 14th century entrusted the design and construction of their large shrines, the carving of stonework and the painting of frescos in spacious interiors, to masters from provincial workshops, as well as to those from the coastal regions and Byzantine towns, depending on the character of the work and available artistic support. In the free selection of artistic forms, open to western concepts for the outer appearance of churches, they satisfied the requirements of the Orthodox rite in the disposition and function of spatial elements, preserving with consistency the appropriate character of wall-paintings and icons. The faithful in the Middle Ages admired such churches, but did not marvel at them: they were the expression of a specific and exciting—only for the present-day observer unexpected—synthesis that was the natural outcome of cultural circumstances and vital artistic practice. This vitality was felt in the works of the masters from other branches of art. Take, for instance, the handiwork of goldsmiths who fashioned "holy vessels" for the needs of the East-Christian cult, while decorating them with ornaments from the repertoire of western art, just as masters in that same period carve Byzantine and Romanesque (or Gothic) embellishments on the portals and windows of the churches before them.

A considerable number of feudal and town churches were erected in a more modest spirit within simpler forms. Only the rudimentary facts about them have been outlined in the appendix. Neither does this list offer a balanced testimony to their number and disposition. Those churches in towns whose remains have been insufficiently investigated, to a large extent have yet to be analyzed. One need only to compare their number in towns like Ohrid, Kastoria or Verroia, which preserve their early nuclei throughout Ottoman rule, or, at least, have surviving data about Christian structures in the defters (censuses), to project how many of them may have existed in the prosperous centers in Kosovo, with wealthy mine owners or lessees, master craftsmen, merchants and artisans. It has already been stated that, apart from the local population, these places were also inhabited by "foreigners," whose social and legal status was established by law, and implied, among other things, ownership rights, exemption from certain taxes, etc. There were many citizens from Dubrovnik, Venice and Genoa among them. In addition, the mines attracted Albanians whose arrival was prompted by the expansion of the medieval Serbian state into territory to the south of Scutari.

The growing exploitation of mineral riches in Serbia and Bosnia gathered momentum from the mid-14th century since mines in Europe were being exhausted. Thus, around Novo Brdo and Janjevo where silver mixed with gold was being excavated, as well as Trepča and elsewhere, tales spread about the rich deposits. The wealth was enormous. Archival data disclose that one fifth of the total European production of silver was exported from Serbia and Bosnia only via Dubrovnik.

No churches have survived in medieval fortified towns with suburbs, or in marketplaces where, sometimes several times a year, fairs were held on particular feast-days when merchants from afar assembled offering commodities to the local population. In the last century of independence, however, no further monumental churches followed the completion of the Holy Archangels. With the

Two-light window, Dečani

revenues continually yielded by the mines, churches were built in the north, chiefly in the Morava River basin where the center of the state moved under the rule of Prince Lazar and his heirs. The monasteries on Mt. Athos were also lavishly furnished with gifts of silver. The quantities of this precious metal were expressed in characteristic liters or ounces, not in the currency unit in circulation at the time.

On the other hand, Peć, with "the throne of St. Sava," remained the heart of Kosovo spiritual life. The Church viewed Prince Lazar (1371–1389) as rightful heir to the Nemanjić and bearer of sovereignty over all Serbian lands, as expressed in his title and the manner in which he was addressed by state representatives and ecclesiastical dignitaries from other countries. The reestablishment of canonic relations with Constantinople, interrupted because of the conflict brought about by Stefan Dušan's proclamation as emperor and the elevation of the Serbian Archbishop to the rank of Patriarch, was of utmost importance both for the political position of the country and the peaceful existence of the Serbian Church. These important issues were discussed at councils in Peć summoned at Prince Lazar's initiative. Through the mediation of Athonite monks, an agreement acceptable to both churches was reached, and above the grave of the Emperor Dušan in the Holy Archangels in Prizren, in 1375, the decision of reconciliation was proclaimed in the presence of envoys from the Patriarchate of Constantinople. After that, the Prince commenced the construction of his large monastery of Ravanica, to which his body was transferred, first buried in Priština after his death, a year after the battle of Kosovo (1389). The disturbances and pressures that forced Lazar's widow and son, the young prince, to recognize the Sultan's authority as vassals, left traces on the grand endowments of the Nemanjić. In 1397, Princess Milica paid a visit to Dečani and, as stated in her granting charter, came across "a genuinely pitiful sight": the monastery was burned down and devastated by "the vile Ismailite people." She restored to the monastery the estates that had been taken from it and conferred upon it several of her own; she also renovated the bronze polycandilion dating from the time of church construction, the largest surviving specimen of its kind in the Byzantine world. A wide, circular ring, held by twenty--meter-long "chains," suspended on the base of the dome, illuminated the interior during evening prayers with dozens of candles and hanging lights. Its parts—all together, there were around 600—had perforated ornaments, and in the circles with decoratively linked letters, as was the custom, was the name of its founder: Stefan the King. The Princess, at that time the nun Eugenia, commissioned a similar piece to record the memory of her sons, Stefan and Vukan and herself in the same manner. At a later time, popular tradition concocted the legend that the choros had been forged out of the weapons of the warriors fallen in the battle of Kosovo.

Until the final conquest by the Ottomans in 1455, modest-sized churches whose founders and time of construction are, in the main, unknown, continued to be built in towns, on feudal estates and monastic *metochia*. In the long centuries of Ottoman rule, people gathered in these ecclesiastical buildings collecting contributions in order to restore them, protect them from demolition, and re-paint the frescos, or, at least, replace damaged ones, adorn interiors with icons and furnish them with liturgical vessels. With the passage of time, however, as the religious and ethnic structure of the population has changed, these efforts have decreased.

The overall survey of hundreds of Christian places of worship—although itself incomplete attests to lively religious life and the character of the environment over the course of centuries. Their density and disposition is shown on the map in the appendix. Several large structures that supplement this picture have, fortunately, survived. The most significant of them, as regards its influence and role in the organization of spiritual life and the preservation of national consciousness, was the Patriarchate of Peć—until the fortunes of war turned against the Austrian general Piccolomini whose campaign had won support of the Serbian people in Kosovo. Fearing retribution, they were compelled to move into regions across the Sava and the Danube (1690).

Post scriptum

The first decades of the 18th century mark the beginning of the withdrawal of the Ottoman Empire. The authorities moderated the position toward their subjects of other religions and after the first Serbian uprising (1804–1812) they were forced to accept the demands of the Great Powers, especially Russia, to protect the Christian population in the Balkans. Although after the Berlin Congress (1878) Turkey gave preference to Islamized immigrant clans as a protection against Serbia and Montenegro who were preparing to liberate their people, the Sultan's regular army had to safeguard the monasteries in Kosovo against inroads and plunders of highlanders who descended into fertile plains. In Dečani, Devič and the Patriarchate of Peć there were

garrisons of Turkish askers that fraternities provided with board and lodging, just as they were paid by the "hereditary chieftains" from certain Albanian clans to defend them.

In 1912, when Serbia and Montenegro finally liberated Kosovo, Metohija and the entire territory of Old Serbia, *not a single* Islamic shrine was demolished or desecrated—not the Bajrakli Mosque in Prizren, the Imperial (Fetih) Mosque in Priština, the Hadum-Mosque in Djakovica, or Murad's Turbeh on the field of Kosovo in which an icon lamp burns today on the site where Sultan Murad I was killed. Nor have any of the residences, towers or structures of historic import suffered, the best confirmation of this claim being the Sinan Pasha Mosque in Prizren, built exclusively with stones and fragments of architectural decoration brought from the Holy Archangels; the Orthodox population and the authorities of the Kingdom of Serbia did not allow their demolition. "A ruined shrine is still a holy place"—states a notice from that period—"and to demolish a place of worship that has become a shrine of another faith amounts to committing an evil deed. Revenge is contrary to God's justice, always more pressing and attainable than human."

During World War II when the territories of Kosovo and Metohija were an Italian protectorate the local Albanian authorities attempted to demolish the memorial church in Djakovica along with the charnel-house of Serbian soldiers fallen in 1915. This act was prevented by the Italian military command. After the war, in 1950, the church--charnel-house was nevertheless pulled down by the local government on the basis of a petition with signatures extorted from local Serbs, chiefly members of the Communist party. At the same time, none of the 18 mosques and 12 tekias in Djakovica were touched. Such an act encouraged attempts to devastate Devič, damage Dečani and desecrate Gračanica and the Hermitage of St. Peter of Koriša. Finally, under circumstances which were never officially explained, on 16 May 1981, the large dormitory of the Patriarchate of Peć burned to the ground.

In our times, the shrines in Kosovo continue to hold the attention of historians, art historians, archaeologists and conservators. A considerable number of them have been protected, and the work undertaken has brought to light new and valuable discoveries. The future of these culturally significant enterprises will depend on elementary living conditions and a readiness to put into effect international obligations contained in the convention on the protection of world cultural heritage adopted at the United Nations Conference held in Vancouver in 1976. Article no 9 reads as follows: "The right of each country is to be, with full sovereignty, the inheritor of its own cultural values which are the fruit of its history, and it is its duty to treasure them as values representing an inseparable part of the cultural heritage of mankind."

The Sacred Land: Art of Kosovo,
The Monacelli Press 1997, pp. 223–240.

The Wedding at Canna of Galilee,
vault of the narthex, the Patriarchate of Peć, 1565

The Mission of the Apostles,
Church of the Holy Apostles,
west wall, the Patriarchate of Peć, ca. 1260

View of the Hermitage of Saint Peter of Koriša

Emperor Dušan of Serbia (1331–1355), during the building of the Monastery of the Holy Archangels near Prizren, wrote a charter for the building of another monastery atop the mountain where St. Peter fell asleep in the Lord. This charter still exists, dated May 19th, 1343, which charged the then-Abbot Gregory of Hilandar to provide the necessary materials to build a chapel over the wonderworking relics of St. Peter, and to consecrate it in the name of St. Peter of Koriša. From that time on the Monastery of St. Peter of Koriša became a metochion (dependency) of the Hilandar Monastery, meaning that Hilandar would provide not only for its physical maintenance, but for its spiritual needs in terms of allowing monastics from Hilandar to live there. Because of the proximity of his feast-day to that of the Holy Apostles Peter and Paul, and because his monastic name was received in honor of the great Apostle Peter, the pious villagers and monastics of Koriša and beyond came to also celebrate his feast-day, especially at the nearby Monastery of the Holy Apostles in Peć, on June 29, the feast-day of the Holy Apostles Peter and Paul.

Saint Petar of Koriša the most distinguished Serbian hermit in the Middle Ages.
The formation of his cult went through several developmental stages and in conformity with the supreme models of Byzantine hagiography. During the process, the original hermitage grew into an anachoretic community which, in turn, grew into a lavra and, eventually, into a monastery of cenobitic type. The cult of St. Petar of Koriša had been fostered in the monastery until the end of the 17th century, when the devastating Ottoman raids urged the translation of the saint's relics to the Monastery of Crna Reka.
Saint Petar of Koriša represents a phenomenon of broader significance. His saintly character, especially the ways in which it was displayed and the stages in the development of his veneration are an invaluable contribution to the integral perception of the ascetic patterns and cult practices of the East Christian world.

The Church of Saint Peter of Koriša

Gojko Subotić

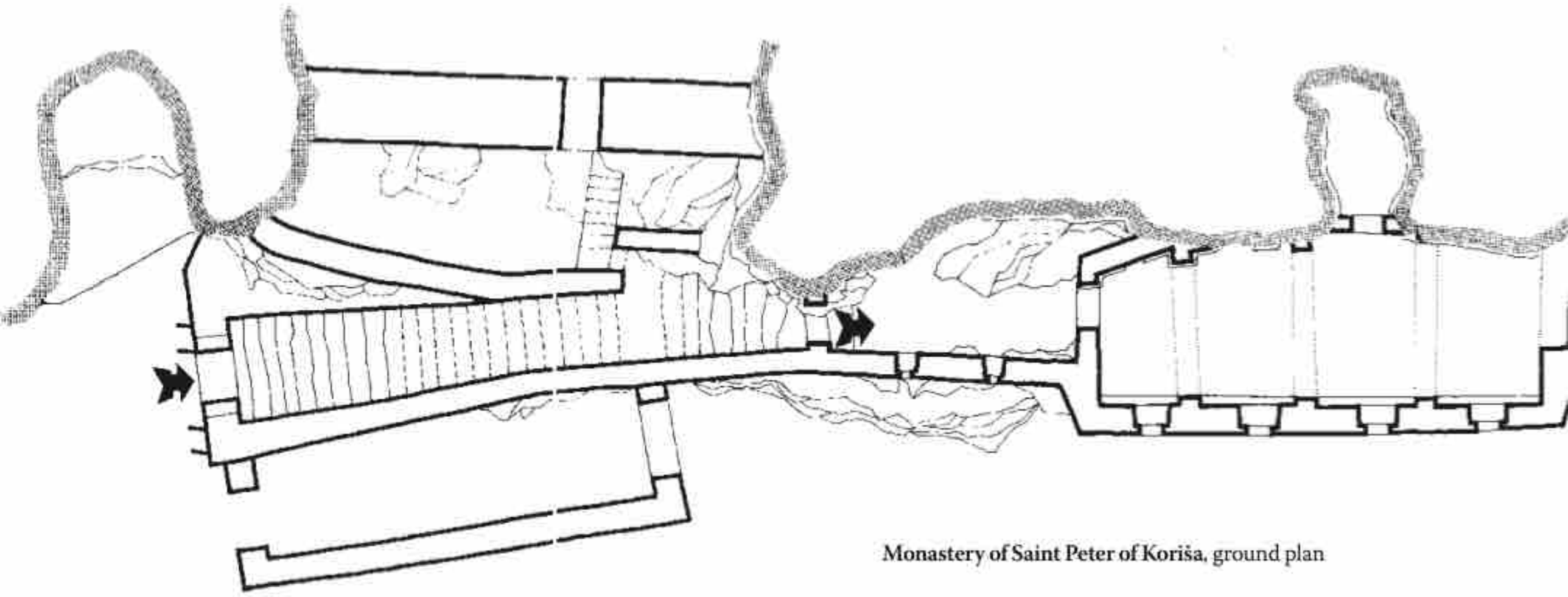
Followers of the anachoretic life, that "wild flower" of Eastern Christian monasticism, made an early appearance among the Serbs. Their modest dwellings on cliffs of sheer rocks allow one only occasionally to recognize that these were the old abodes of hermits who sought peace in craggy, inaccessible localities and isolation from the world in order to spend their lives in strict ascetic devotion. They lived in natural caves, which they roughly fashioned to fit the basic needs of their cult and to protect themselves from inclement weather and attacks of wild beasts. The generally dry wall partitions shutting the entrances to their cells were destroyed by time, obliterating traces of the hermits' former presence. More visible signs of their lives have been preserved in better-protected spots whose occupants were able to reinforce them with better materials and to decorate the prayer areas with wall-paintings. The hermits' survival also depended on longer sojourns in these caves and more careful maintenance of the cells, particularly if one of its founders attained a measure of renown, as well as the disciples who followed in his footsteps.

In the Prizren region, in the rugged surroundings of Koriša, Peter the Hermit won fame in the early decades of the 13th century for his ascetic feats. His simple life of supreme renunciation and prayer was vividly described in the following century by well-known writer Teodosije who had expressly come from Hilandar (on Mt. Athos) to see the site of Peter's dwellings and to hear at first hand the legends about him that had been transmitted by his followers. Being familiar with the lives of ascetics, their spiritual moods and hesychastic conceptions which were experiencing a revival on Mt. Athos at precisely that time, Teodosije described in the *Lives of the Saints* and in his *Service*, the spiritual drama of this hermit and the moral temptations that accompanied his seclusion from the world, as well as the rigors of survival.

According to Teodosije, in searching for a sanctuary which would give him the peace he sought, young Peter found himself in the Koriša River canyon in a deserted spot lodged between steep rocks. He settled in one of the barely accessible caves, "facing the wind and the sun." There he lived "frozen by the cold and scorched by the sun's heat"... as if he were bodiless, all the while gathering wild plants and the bitter beech acorn, if these be called nourishment." There preserved in this cave an interesting and early part of a wall-painting on the lower layer of uneven rock surfaces dating from the days of the Koriša hermit himself. Where the altar was located on the eastern side there is a depiction of the *Procession of the Hieromonks* under ornamented painted arches. Above them is the Deisis—Christ enthroned with the Holy Mother of God and St. John the Baptist drawn in an unusual pose with heads folded in prayer over the chest. In the same row, in the "naos" of the cave, we see the Archangel Michael and the Apostle Peter and, at a lower level, damaged figures of the Warrior-Saints (Demetrius, George, Prokopius, Mercurius, Nicetas and Blasius) who are also under arches.

Although sources do not record this, the hermit dedicated his prayer area—as seen by the disposition of the drawings—to the Archangel Michael. This celestial her-

Hermitage of Saint Peter of Koriša,
the dome with two layers of frescos, 13th and 14th century



Monastery of Saint Peter of Koriša, ground plan

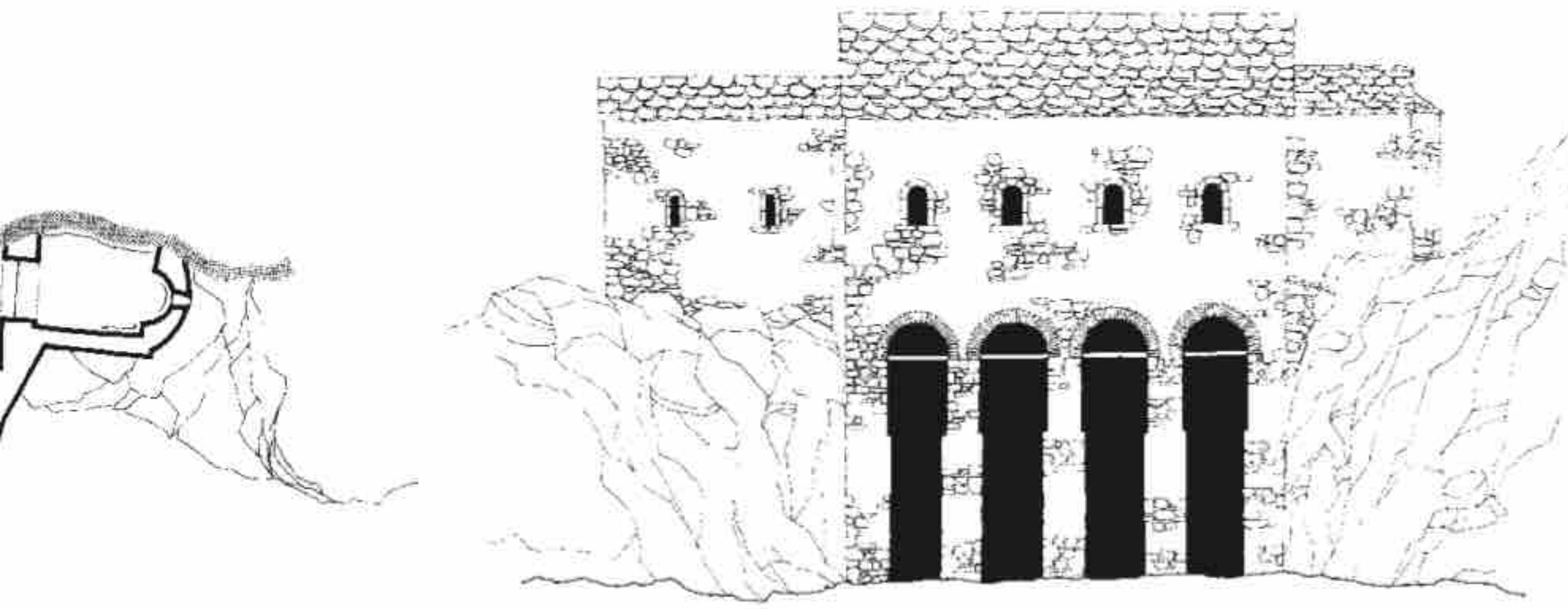
ald and executor of divine will on earth, had shrines dedicated to him throughout the Christian world—ranging from cult sites in the East, across southern Italy (Monte Sant Angelo) to Normandy (Mont Saint-Michel). All these are on heights and frequently above water from where Michael descended to succor men or to punish them by meting out justice. In a vivid depiction of the struggle waged by the lone Peter against evil powers which had populated the surrounding caves and disturbed him in his spiritual devotions, Teodosije recounts that Peter opposed them by praying and making the sign of the cross. Similarly he was saved from Satan, embodied in the "terrible dragon" by the Archangel Michael himself. For this reason, the Archangel was awarded the spot right next to the "altar space." Behind him, also at the behest of the Koriša hermit, is St. Peter because his namesake adopted the saint's name when he become a monk in a church dedicated to the Apostle, near his village.

The archaic iconographic elements and the simplified forms of the depictions, lack plasticity but are nonetheless expressive with powerful dark lineaments and rich ornaments recalling the art of earlier times, expressiveness that lasted longer in the regions of the Empire, particularly in Cappadocia, in the largest hermitage in the Byzantine world.

It also characterized the frescos in the shrines of the Basilian monks in southern Italy and in the rock-hewn churches in Sicily. In a specific way, the wall-paintings of the time of Peter of Koriša, were similar to those in the well-known Prizren Gospel, a rare preserved example of Serbian manuscript illumination originating in this area which itself followed the simple, even rustic language, of linear forms so typical of the older sculptural art developed on the Adriatic coast. However, a number of historical reasons and especially the parallel appearance of Greek and Slavic inscriptions on the frescos, indicate that the hermit's cell was decorated in the second quarter of the 13th century, undoubtedly after the permanent integration of the Prizren region into the borders of the Serbian state.

As testified to by younger anchorites attracted to Peter by his holy life, the hermit prepared his own tomb. It was located, as investigations have shown, in a cavity in the back of the cave and therefore the Deisis across the whole wall in this part of the cell is of special significance. The depiction of the prayer which the Holy Mother of God and John the Baptist address Christ for the salvation of sinners (usually drawn in the central part of the Last Judgment scene) suited its sepulchral character.

The veneration shown to the Koriša hermit during his lifetime was intensified by legends and grew into a cult. A number of caves near the cell were inhabited by ascetics who followed his example, while several decades later a church was built next to the cell on the southern side. In this new space the old hermit's cell acquired the status of a parekklesion. Later documents indicate that Peter's abode was placed under the aegis of the Serbian monastery of Hilandar on Mt. Athos, whose representative in Metohija was Grigorije, an aged hermit. It was his wish



Hermitage of Saint Peter of Koriša, reconstruction

for the writer Teodosije to come from the parent brotherhood to celebrate the Koriša hermit in his *Life of the Saint* and in a special liturgical service. This was an act required to introduce new personages into the order of sainthood.

The new structure in Koriša was of a simple oblong shape but its eastern side along the steep rocky incline had to be given very tall supporting pillars connected by arches. This was an isolated instance in early Serbian architecture. It is possible that this unique structure was inspired by the experiences of the Athonite builders who frequently buttressed their edifices above a rocky coast in a similar manner. It may well be that this was the idea of Grigorije who perhaps brought the skilled craftsmen from Athos to Koriša for this purpose. Further westward, monastic cells were added which expanded the hermitage but their appearance and all the forms of the church and other structures at the eastern end cannot now be envisaged from the ruins.

The chapel near the cell was also painted with frescos. The scenes that have been left of the life of Christ and the Mother of God (Lazarus' Resurrection, the Annunciation of Anne, the Nativity and the Presentation of the Mother of God) reflect the characteristics of the first half of the 14th century.

In spreading the cult of Peter the Hermit, Brother Grigorije built a church dedicated to him in the village of Koriša itself. He had it decorated with wall-paintings and supplied it with all necessities including a library. Somewhat later, in 1343, while making ready to start building the large monastery of the Holy Archangels which he ordained as his tomb—also near Prizren—King Stefan Dušan appointed Jakov as its first *hegoumenos.* Jakov was a highly educated and capable person who later become the Metropolitan of Serres. In order to help him carrying out his considerable duties and supervising the construction work, the King granted him St. Peter's church in the village as his seat and gave the aged Grigorije the old shrine of Peter of Koriša as his personal property.

The later lives of the monks in this hermitage following the lofty example if its founder left no significant traces, though a number of shrines were established prior to the fall of the Prizren region to Ottoman rule in 1455. They are known to us today mainly as ruins, as is the cell itself which survived the next two or three centuries. We know from a document written in 1572 that the monks transferred the bones of St. Peter to the Crna Reka Monastery which was hidden from sight and therefore less likely to suffer Ottoman violence.

The Sacred Land: Art of Kosovo,
The Monacelli Press 1997, pp. 16–90.

The Church of Studenica of Hvosno

Gojko Subotić

One of the first bishoprics of the Serbian Church was established in Hvosno, the birthplace of the hermit Peter, sometime during the years of his spiritual maturation and search for peace in the Koriša cliffs. Directly prior to this, St. Sava with his reputation as a high-born monk who devoted himself wholly to the spiritual life on Mt. Athos received autocephaly for the Serbian Church from the Patriarch of Constantinople (in Nicaea), and was himself ordained as its first archbishop in 1219. Sava chose as the see of the Hvosno bishops an old place of worship above the village of Studenica. This was an excellent site above a fertile valley across which spread the monastery estates. Here, too, an old custom of the Christian Church was repeated. This was to erect a new structure over partially restored ruins where believers gathered on holy days. It is not unlikely that in the early Byzantine period the seat of the bishopric was also located there. After the collapse of Samuilo's state and the revival of Byzantine authority in 1019, these parts, together with some others, were subordinated to the Ohrid Archbishopric. The deed granted by Basil II makes special mention of Hvosno as a part of the Prizren Bishopric.

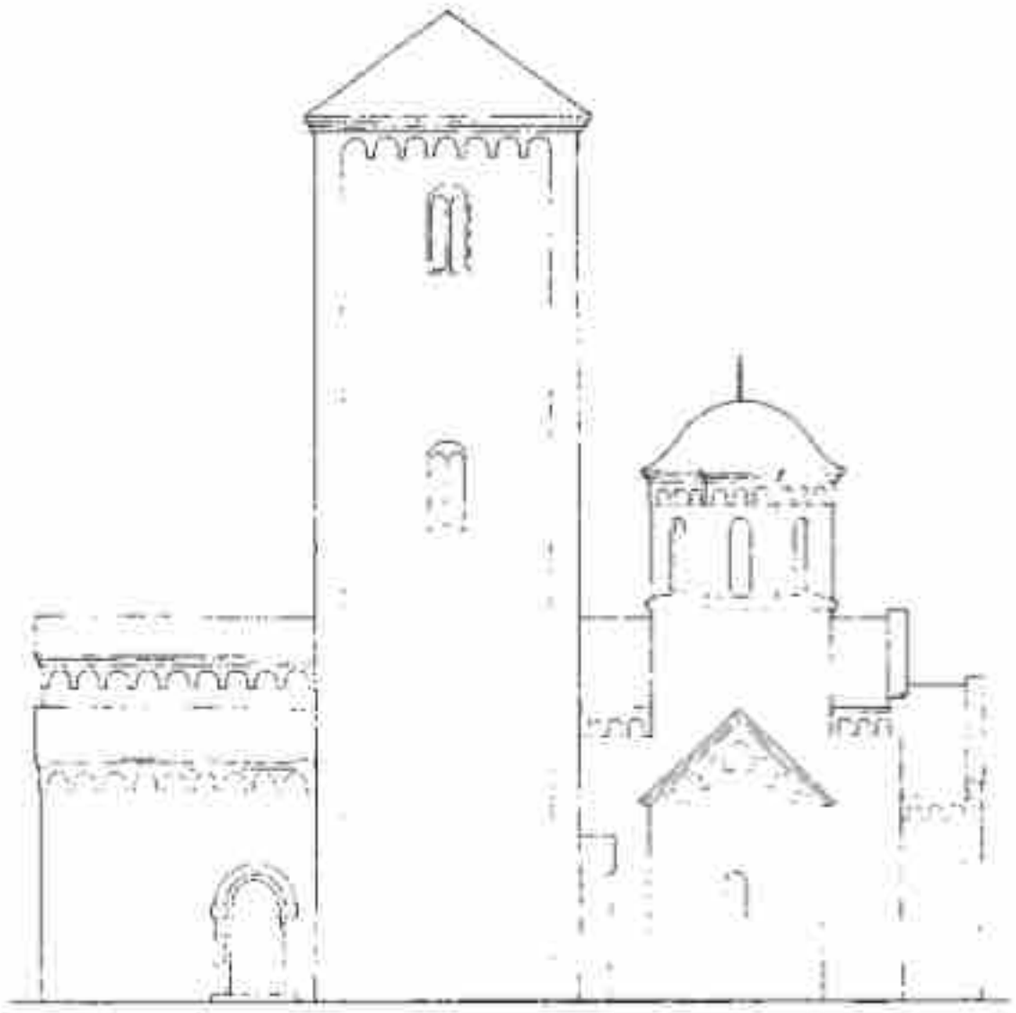
Both the older and younger entities in the Hvosno Studenica were largely protected by late classical multi-angled ramparts and outer walls extending along the margins of the flattened slope, the last one above the plain where the Mokra Mountain hillsides end.

In the second half of the 19th century there still were remains of the old complex and its medieval structures ("huge and terrible cliffs"), but these descriptions are not all reliable. It was archaeological excavations which shed new light on their character and interrelations. In the meantime, the stonework—well-cut blocks, parts of the architectural relief and a slab with incised inscriptions—was used by the local population for their needs. As a result they can still be found on houses in the neighboring villages. Marble pillars and ornamental blocks from the ruins were removed to Peć when a Turkish bath was built. Mainly shallow foundations were discovered in these structures. This indicates that initially there was a three-aisled basilica with a semi-circular apse and narthex. Within the bema, under the consistory table there was also a vaulted premise with steps leading to a reliquary, usually containing a special casket. The western part of the shrine, mostly ruined, has not been clearly delineated. But the eastern part proves that the basilica was built before the middle of the 6th century. The role of the diaconicon was probably taken by the small church of a simple, oblong form on the north side. It seems that it suffered less damage over time and perhaps was restored and served for rituals even before the erection of the episcopal complex within the Serbian Church.

The Monastery of the Mother of God of Hvosno, near Istok, in Metohija, originating from the 6th century, renovated in the 13th and 14th century. During the period of St. Sava this monastery was the seat of the diocese, and it was left desolate, most likely in the period of the great migration from Kosovo in 1690.

Of special interest are the old underground barrel-vaulted tombs on both the internal and external sides of the ramparts. They are a kind of sepulchral structure widely built in the Roman Balkans, in which number of built tombs have been preserved, but earlier frequent diggings, as elsewhere, have emptied the site of findings. The limited excavations prevent a full view of the walls with the stronghold. The stronghold in fact had contributed to the safety of this small but imposing unit with its entrance on the northern, most accessible side.

Descent into Hades, Church of the Mother of God Hodegetria, north arm of the cross, vault, the Patriarchate of Peć, ca. 1335



Church of the Mother of God at Hvosno, ideal reconstruction

Earlier structures were probably conserved when it was decided to make the locality the center of one of the bishoprics of the Serbian Church. Some of the later structures therefore relied upon the previous ones. Broad ramparts with expertly laid rows of bricks on top of the medieval stone provided a sturdy foundation. Basically, by following earlier traces it was possible to retain the entrance on the northern side which was strengthened by other semi-circular towers in place of the ruined ones with their square bases.

The main church dating from the time of St. Sava and dedicated to the Dormition of the Mother of God replaced an earlier one with its apse stretching across the previous apse. But its forms did not repeat the character of earlier churches. Its ground plan can only be discerned in the shallow foundations of the old broad basilican space. By its spatial conception it represented the finalized form of the type of edifice usually called the Raška school in the history of Serbian architecture, since the time of Gabriel Millet. This refers to a single-nave edifice with a developed altar space, a domed central bay enlarged on the south and north sides with rectangular choirs, and a somewhat elongated space and narthex in the west.

It is likely that Žiča Cathedral was the model for Hvosno. It was precisely the former church that by closing the vestibules at the lateral ends of the subdomical area with separate spaces for the prothesis and the diaconicon completed the formation of the blueprint which was to characterize the Raška school edifices of the 13th century.

In Hvosno as well, east of the choirs, it has been possible to recognize the square parts of the bema of which the northern part had a special ritual function. According to the Orthodox rite, sacrificial offerings were prepared in it and preserved after being consecrated.

As in other major architectural "schools" in the East and West, every structure varied the basic ground plans to a degree, observing not only the function of the individual parts but also their interrelationships. A careful comparison between the Hvosno Church of the Mother of God and shrines dating from the first half of the 13th century points to similar relations and rhythms between parts and forms, as well as to the differences which were not only the consequence of the work of other master-builders but also of slight shifts in specific sequences in the elaboration of stylistic wholes.

A thorough analysis of the ground plans, especially of the details offering information about the statics and structural requirements of the foundation, can enable us to conjure up the former appearance of the ruined edifice and some of its forms. Thus here, too, only drawings of ideal reconstructions can show us what the probable aspects of these edifices were.

Unfortunately, many invaluable elements were removed from the site with building materials which otherwise could have made it possible to form a more accurate picture of the shapes of the upper parts of the church.

The dome, dominating the central part of the naos with four strong pilasters, stood on doubled arches with pendentives that formed a ring-like base for the drum. The apse, whose opening was practically as broad as the entire naos, was externally square, while from the north and south sides it later got the rectangular spaces of the prothesis and diaconicon which were twice as wide as the transept sides.

The elongated feature of the edifice was emphasized but its general appearance was considerably altered by subsequent additions. Despite insufficient data for a fuller reconstruction of the whole complex, it is possible to assume what the basic structure looked like. In the spirit of Raška architecture, north and south of the narthex parekklesia were erected with smaller apses, externally less pronounced but of a rectangular shape. They were not directly attached to the narthex but separated from it with rather large walls, unusual for space of this size and function. This can be explained by the need to reinforce statically the upper, taller sections. It is rightly believed that towers also stood in these places, or on the western façade in the earlier architecture. The fact that an outer narthex was added to the western side also confirms this assumption. Its interior was certainly divided by columns while the bays were probably groin-vaulted. By analogy with other churches in which the bishops had their seat, it can be concluded that above the developed western part there regularly were katechoumena, well-known in the architecture of Mt. Athos. According to this biographer, St. Sava himself tried to introduce to his homeland the finest models; we can therefore assume that the katechoumena and the parekklesia built along the lateral sides of the catholicon of the large

monasteries (the Lavra of St. Athanasius, Iveron and Vatopedi) were built at Sava's initiative in Žiča. They then became a part of the building plans of the Raška builders. In the context of the Hvosno Studenica, it is possible that there were premises above the exonarthex and the parekklesia which would explain the meaning of the narrow "passages" on both side of the porch. Across them it was possible, by means of a staircase, to reach a katechoumena and the towers from which the bells were rung.

The general similarity to the Church of the Ascension in Žiča (the Savior's Church), including the presence of the outer narthex and towers, leads to the conclusion that the Mother of God of Hvosno belongs to the earliest shrines raised following ecclesiastical independence, that in fact it had its origin in the third decade of the 13th century and its exonarthex, parekklesia and towers in the following decade of that century.

The preserved lower parts of the main church, although relatively modest, speak interestingly of the origin of the builders employed to raise it. These sections were made of stone with a façade of *tufa*, a material easily hewn and fashioned into light arched and vaulted structures. The remaining parts exhibit tiers of accurately dressed stone typical of the stone-masonry workshop which produced the Romanesque churches in the Zeta coastal area. The flat pilasters strengthening the façade and the aspect of the altar apse conform to this tradition. On the outside, the square shape characterized a large number of 9th to 12th century shrines in Dioclea and in the Bay of Cattaro. To this, one must add relatively simple Romanesque capitals with leafy designs, perhaps a fragment of the church furnishings belonging to the same style. Everything therefore leads to the conclusion that these experienced stone-masons with their feel for proportion came from the Adriatic coast, perhaps from Cattaro itself, whence builders had previously come to Serbia. The open circulation between the Adriatic coast and inland regions, especially with Kosovo, was intensified even more once these areas found themselves within the borders of the Serbian state.

The interior of the church was covered with frescos whose fragments indicate that the walls were painted on two separate occasions. The few remaining fragments do not however help us to say more about them.

The monastic complex also contained other buildings. To the south, near the ramparts, another smaller elongated church seems to have been built in the 14th century, while in the northern section we can see a large portion of a fairly spacious rectangular refectory whose end with apse is in ruins. The refectory was not, interestingly, located at its usual site, west of the narthex from where monks collectively went to their meals. The choice of the site here is probably due to shortage of space.

Epitaphios of Hvosno, mid-14th century,
the Treasury of the Patriarchate of Peć

This considerably damaged painted epitaphios dating from the mid-14th century was found in the ruins of the episcopal Church of the Mother of God of Hvosno near Peć. The Patriarchate of Peć had one of the richest treasuries in medieval Serbia.

Even if the ruins could provide a hint of the basic forms of the main structures it would be difficult from the scant written sources to reconstruct the rich history of the monastery and the Hvosno bishopric's see during the several ensuing centuries before this shrine met its end, first damaged by a destructive fire and then abandoned during the Great Migration of 1690. We do know, however, of the lives of several distinguished Hvosno hieromonks, bishops and metropolitans whose tombstones have been preserved. We are also acquainted with their writings, transcription and book-binding activities. Some record of their artistic accomplishments has reached us. Before the Second World war by strange coincidence, a large bell was dug up along with precious embroidered and painted cloth that had been hidden by the monks at a time when they had to abandon their dwellings. A large epitaphios, in the Peć Patriarchate today, was the work of an excellent artisan from the early 14th century while the famous writer and painter, Longin, who occasionally stayed in Hvosno prepared a wonderful drawing as a young man to serve as the design for a large aer in 1597. All these are, nonetheless, but pale reflections of the opulent interiors and treasures which were once collected in this episcopal center. Today the past of the monastery can be evoked only by the ambience and treasuries of monasteries which are still standing.

The Sacred Land: Art of Kosovo,
The Monacelli Press 1997, pp. 20–25.

The Patriarchate of Peć, view from the east

Patriarchate of Peć

UNESCO WORLD HERITAGE SITE

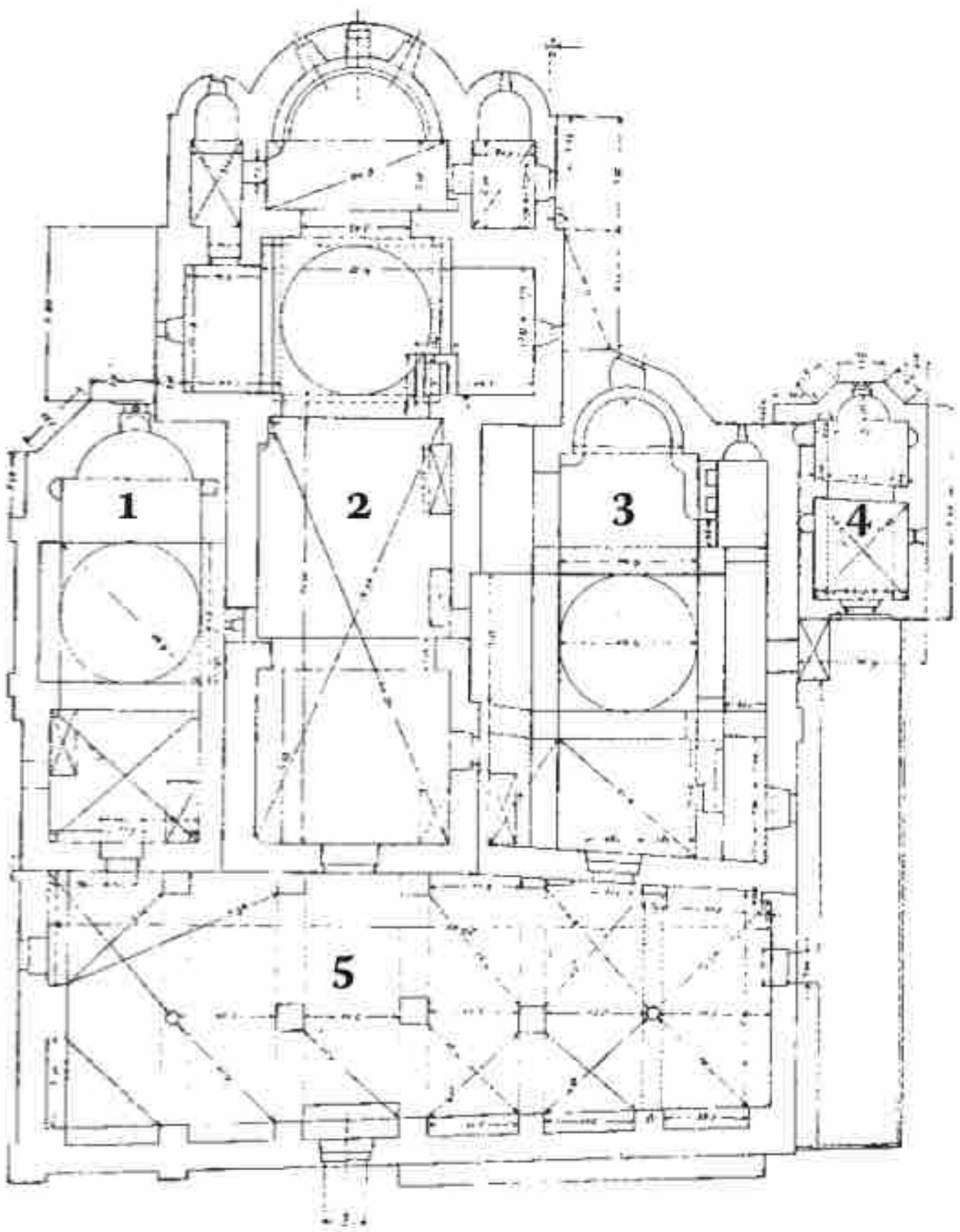
Gojko Subotić

The Church of the Holy Apostles, 13th century

A *structure* added to an earlier place of worship near Hvosno at the point where the Bistrica River emerges from its lengthy and picturesque gorge was of far-reaching significance for the overall subsequent life of the Serbian Church. The site itself with its fortification was called "The Gorge," while the numerous caves scattered about on its rugged cliffs, deep and often hardly visible, gave the neighboring village its name of Peć (cave). Because these grottoes were very early populated by anchorites this locality was placed under the aegis of the Žiča Monastery and together with them, mentioned in the very first deed granted by King Stefan Provovenčani (the "First-Crowned"). Moreover, the entire region was called Metohija (*metochion*, in Greek) by token of these monastery estates.

The extensive lice holdings and the monastic community were governed by the Archbishop; it was therefore logical that the churches on these estates were built at his behest, often under his direct supervision. The renewal of an earlier single-nave church in the Peć area and the structures added to it are ascribed by Archbishop Nikodim in 1319 to St. Sava himself, who is also mentioned as its founder in an inscription under his somewhat younger portrait inside the church. It may well be that this first Serbian Archbishop was engaged in the raising of a church in the remote locality of Žiča, but there is reason to believe that Sava's successor Arsenije (1233–1263) deserves full credit for the undertaking. The long ceremonious inscription under the Deisis in the altar apse ends in a prayer with his name at the close of it. The interior of the church dedicated to the Holy Apostles was painted in the years between 1250 and 1260. The Archbishop himself manifested his ties to this locality by his decision to be buried there. After his death, when it became known that miracles occurred about his tomb, the church was referred to as Arsenije's.

Of the earlier building, dating from the 11th century the elongated naos was retained, while the remaining parts were expanded on in the Raška architectural mode. Here, too, a dome was built over the central space against the gently pointed arches with pendentives whose lower, square area was shaped into a circular base of the drum. The sub-



The Patriarchate of Peć, ground plan

1. Church of Saint Demetrius
2. Church of the Holy Apostles
3. Church of the Mother of God Hodegetria
4. Church of Saint Nicholas
5. Narthex

Ascension of Christ, detail: Angel and Apostle Peter,
Church of the Holy Apostles, dome, the Patriarchate of Peć, ca. 1260

domical area was, by custom, enlarged with rectangular choirs while on the eastern side the altar space was extended with a bay that enabled freer circulation. At the same time, a separate prothesis and diaconicon were erected on the north and south sides, both vaulted and ending in semi-circular apses.

The remains of the walls outside the present foundation have not been sufficiently investigated; it may well be that there were parekklesia originally on the lateral sides which were later removed when larger churches were raised on these sites.

The fairly rough manner of construction here was perhaps a reflection of the modest monastic environment for which the church had been commissioned. However, the forms and construction design of the church demonstrate the builder's skill and assurance. He covered the façade of the building with mortar and, as in Žiča by emulating the Mt. Athos churches, he painted it in a vivid shade of red. The monastic tradition interpreted this color as being the blood of the martyrs who perished for the sake of their faith.

Regarded as a part of the Raška architectural school in which every monument—despite its similarity and kinship with other monuments—had specific traits of its own: the Church of the Holy Apostles had a plan and spatial conception as well as certain forms that corresponded to the ecclesiastical needs of the Eastern Church and belonged to Byzantine tenets. At the same time, however, the specific method of construction revealed elements indicating that the skills and practice of western builders had been mastered and that analogous edifices could be found along the coast and on the opposite shore of the Adriatic Sea.

The interior decorative elements of the Holy Apostles, despite its damaged aspect in its present-day impoverished ambience and the changes that took place in later centuries, still present a fairly rich picture of the spiritual life and sophisticated ideas of the time. The church's iconography and artistic craftsmanship, more than the edifice itself, its size and character, prove that on the estate of the Archbishopric, it had acquired a special place not only within the borders of lice, but also throughout the land. Above all, the wall-paintings show that already by Archbishop Arsenije's time the sepulchral character of the church was emphasized by the presence of a sarcophagus in the western part. Moreover, the idea that the church should become the resting place of other Serbian prelates had certainly been widely adopted when Arsenije's successor, the second member of the Nemanjić dynasty, namely, the youngest son of Stefan the First-Crowned, Sava II (1263–1271) was buried there. The dedication of the church to Christ's disciples was undoubtedly inspired by the grand Church of the Holy Apostles in Constantinople, built at the time of Justinian. The Serbs were well aware that the church, with its appearance, reliquaries and other treasures as described by countless pilgrims, was the mausoleum of a number of Byzantine emperors, and especially of the Ecumenical Patriarchs. The dedication was, of course, linked to the missionary calling of the highest ecclesiastical dignitaries in the Orthodox world, so that the choice of patron for the church that was being built, had the same role in Serbia.

The historiography of art has long endeavoured to discover the specific thematic and iconographic elements that reflect the spiritual atmosphere of the environment to which a church belonged, as well as to ascertain the immediate historical circumstances that could have influenced the choice of depiction to be drawn and the ideas they purported to express. In this sense, much attention was earlier paid to Žiča, the first independent see of the Serbian Church. The bulk of its wall-paintings had been damaged and replaced at a later date (1309–1316), but it is assumed that

they repeated the earlier themes and disposition of St. Sava's times. The conclusions arrived at also refer to the Peć Church, because it was precisely the cathedral church that they took as their model not only for its construction but also for its decorative elements.

The sepulchral nature of the church was primarily expressed by the monumental painting of the Deisis in the spherical part of the broad apse, clearly visible above the low altar screen. The churchgoers knew that the prayer to the enthroned Christ offered by the Mother of God and St. John the Baptist referred mainly to the dignitaries buried there. But the believers were themselves comforted by their faith in salvation and by the knowledge that grace would be granted them on Judgment Day, the depiction of which on the walls showed the same personages in iconographic form as defenders of the human race.

In the lower part of the church, as was customary from the end of the 12th century onward, there is depicted the Service of the Hierarchs together with a series of the most prominent representatives of Christian teachings, holding scrolls with excerpts from liturgical prayers. It is noteworthy that this procession ends with the figures of St. Sava of Serbia, the already deceased and widely venerated founder of the autocephalous Serbian Church. Even earlier custom allowed that eminent prelates of local churches could be portrayed in the altar space, while from the 11th century onward they appeared not only as a part of the autocephalous archbishopric, as in Ohrid and Cyprus, but also in a series of other bishoprics, principally in the Greek ones. It was natural for the image of St. Sava to have first appeared in the Church of the Holy Apostles in Peć as it was most closely linked to the very heart of the Serbian Church. Possibly about the same time an artist of less expressive power repeated Sava's image in the prothesis, representing him as officiating together with his successor Arsenije, but without the other holy fathers to whom this act should have been a priority honour.

The frescos in the cupola and subdomical area express a complex and unique notion: on the broad circular surface painted in ochre tones conjuring up the light enhanced with gleams of the gold leaf in the painting, Christ seems to ascend toward the dark azure of the sky, leaving behind him the disciples with the Mother of God and the Archangels disposed between the windows of the tympanum. As usual, on the pendentives below them the Evangelists are shown as engaged in writing the Savior's life. Between them are the figures of Christ in Mandylion and Keramidion. But on the divided surfaces formed by the substructure of the dome, a number of episodes are illustrated in a special layout which totally differs from that depicted in other cycles. On the western side is the Sending Out of the Apostles; on the southern side is the Resurrection of Lazarus and the Incredulity of Thomas, while on the northern side is the Last Supper and the Descent of the Holy Spirit. In this unusual disposition, the paintings on the eastern surface, probably of the Annunciation, are no longer visible. The reasons for this manner of linking scenes from various thematic entities have been sought in the statements made by Archbishop Nikodim (1317–1325). In the Preface to his translation of the Jerusalem Typikon from Greek, done in 1319, the head of the Serbian Church notes that St. Sava built the church in Peć modelling it on the famous and sacred Jerusalem edifice visited by Sava in his journey through Palestine. This refers to the church in Zion and the monastery of St. Sabbas the Sanctified. This connection should not be interpreted as meaning that the shape of the models was emulated, but that their significance was invoked. Of the episodes to be painted in the central part of the church, three were chosen from the upper part of the Zion church: the Last Supper' the Incredulity of Thomas and the Descent of the Holy Spirit.

The supposition that it was precisely the Zion church that served as a model for the Serbian sees in Peć and Žiča, becomes more convincing if we bear in mind that up to the 12th century, Zion, too, had been dedicated to the Holy Apostles and that Christ, before the Ascension, sent his disciples out to preach the new faith from that very church. The iconography of the Peć church, closely connected with Serbian Church leaders, was directly concordant with the scene recalling their apostolic role. Finally, in view of its significance, the church in Zion was called "The Mother of all Churches" and therefore this appellation was conferred in Serbia on the cathedrals in Žiča and later in Peć.

By being arranged along church's walls whose surfaces were not always suitable for complex compositions, biblical scenes were adapted to the space available, but not always in a harmonious relationship in the architectural framework. Their simple depiction with an orthogonal projection of the ambience and its forms belong mainly to the tradition of earlier artwork. A new period in the development of the so-called monumental 13th century style portrayed mature and powerful plastic forms. The pictures are dominated by figures interpreting events in darkly resonant colors with surfaces lit by sudden rays of light and faces with gleaming eyes and finely modulated brighter tones. The surprising facial expressiveness is barely supported by the ancillary elements as, for instance, in the Ascension episode which is a veritable masterpiece but has only frail tree trunks in the background. The highest achievement of these artists—analyses indicate that a number of hands were at work here—are testified to by the individual portraits and group figures deftly accompanied by seemingly neutral yet tastefully colored surfaces and interiors. The scenes of the Incredulity of Thomas and the Resurrection of Lazarus are examples of such a pictorial language, though an archaic one, due to the exaggerated size of Christ's figure which nonetheless is successfully adapted to the requirements of the available space. The former scene is depicted with firm symmetry under a gently pointed arch, and the latter on an irregular segment of the vaulted field.

Deisis, Church of the Holy Apostles, conch of the apse, the Patriarchate of Peć, ca. 1260

Both evince an exciting rhythm in which the elements of the richly narrated stories are arrayed.

Certain figures of the Apostles, especially the younger ones, evoke reminiscences of the Hellenistic legacy, so discernible in the radiance and gentle sensuality of the figures that could not have been seen in the works of an older, severer spirit. It was as if the artisans glanced back to the earlier works and directly copied their delineations, their plasticity and color harmonies. This was not a new phenomenon: Byzantine art always relied on classical models, sometimes in waves felt powerfully during specific epochs, creating unique paraphrases leading to a distinct style. Broadly speaking, the Peć artwork was not isolated in this sense but it came at the outset of a period in Serbia that reached its fullest expression in the more recent Sopoćani church.

It is not easy to fathom the environment in which the Peć artisans were trained nor the traditions they followed. It must assuredly have been a matter of the involvement of some larger centers where a broad artistic culture could be attained and where there were monuments and collections of old manuscripts that preserved the traditional artistic accomplishments and transmitted them to subsequent generations.

During the ensuing decade, the Archbishopric's Metochion in Peć enjoyed a calmer existence than the Žiča center which was threatened a number of times and which finally suffered from hostile incursions from the north. This was why the remains of Archbishop Joanikije (1279–1286) were transferred to the Holy Apostles. At the same time, valuable objects which were a temptation to attackers were also removed for safe-keeping. It was recorded that the governor of Vidin, Ivan Šišman, descended to "The Gorge" itself (1291–1292) with the intention of seizing the treasures of the Church of the Savior. It was under this name that historical sources referred to the Church of the Savior's Ascension in Žiča. But the same appellation was later also given to the Peć church together with the role it had acquired in the last decade of the 13th century. For after the

Service of the Hierarchs, Church of the Holy Apostles, altar apse, the Patriarchate of Peć, ca. 1260

calamity that had befallen Žiča, the Serbian Archbishops temporarily moved to Peć. In recent times, it has justly been observed that this move did not simply mean transferring the see of the Archbishopric, but also taking over some of its functions. Žiča continued to be regarded as the center of the Serbian Church whose prelates occasionally sojourned there in later centuries as well. Nevertheless, the ecclesiastical administration gradually shifted southwards where, in the following period, the residences of the Serbian kings were frequently located.

Parallel with these developments, the anchorites continued their peaceful lives in their nearby cave abodes. At the time of the Archbishop Jakob (1286–1292), two Greek monks left a Dečani cell for Kotrulica, doubtlessly one of the caves in the Bistrica river Gorge of Peć. Their cave was "enclosed" with walls for their needs. Like other hermits, they spent most of their time in isolation and only on Sundays descended to the Church of the Holy Apostles for prayers and communion.

Today one can still see a number of these hermits' caves on the left side of the river. As in Koriša, the Peć dwellings were enclosed with walls that have been preserved in many places, some of them several metres high. Here, likewise, in places set aside for religious activities, traces of frescos are still visible. These rough-hewn abodes were usually inter-connected by steps carved into the rock or else made of wood which also covered the light roofs and the narrow passages. Incised supports that carried the wooden beams can still be seen on all sides. However, some of the cells could be reached only by rope ladders while heavy loads had to be raised by pulleys.

Thus these modest dwellings whose living conditions were made even more arduous by rain and snow, and their accessibility most hazardous, were nevertheless islands of intensive intellectual activity. The renowned writer and subsequent Patriarch, Jefrem, between 1355 and 1371 wrote most of his canons and 170 stichera in such a cell, where the scribes did not enjoy any better conditions. Thus, there are no grounds for the generally held belief that the scriptoria were housed in spacious, specially built premises. Examples from the Meteora in Thessaly likewise confirm the fact that those cells, clinging to the cliffs like nests, also produced exceptional works in the fields of transcription and illumination.

Entrance of the Church of Saint Demetrius,
14th century, the Patriarchate of Peć

The sudden assaults from the north were a concrete reason why the site of the Church of the Holy Apostles had to be protected by a fortification. Like other monasteries in similar locations, attacks on the monastery and church coming from the heights above them, had to be withstood. Ramparts were therefore built up on a steep incline forming a stronghold of a triangular base. From its highest point, one can still clearly see the lower portions of the formerly stalwart tower.

The frescos in the western part of the Church of the Holy Apostles were painted during the closing years of a century that brought about certain changes. These were probably the work of Archbishop Jevstatije II (1292–1309). We learn from his biography that he had earlier been engaged in restoring the burned church in lice. In Peć, it was necessary to undertake the first indispensable renovative work in the interior of the church where complex divine services had to be held with the participation of a numerous clergy.

At present we do not know what all the wall-paintings were like, since the original frescos in one part of the subdomical area were replaced by later ones. But the faithful entering the church were welcomed here by impressive scenes on walls that had in the past been better illuminated. In two of the highest zones of the church, along the broad, vaulted western wall, the episodes of the Passion of Christ and above the entrance, the figures of Sts Constantine and Helena, are portrayed while on the left and right sides, we can see the large busts of St. Nicholas and the Mother of God. In the lowest zone where, judging by the fragments, there were the portraits of the members of the dynasty, the only remaining figures are those of Kings Stefan the First-Crowned and Uroš I. Both are clothed in monastic vestements and both are named Simeon, a name they assumed after retiring from the throne in order to emulate the venerated founder of their family. These latter portraits no longer belong to the traditional donor composition in the form of a procession headed by Simeon Nemanja and approaching Christ or the Mother of God to receive their Grace. Nor are they characterized by earlier assiduously delineated facial features. These scenes were done by painters who favoured robust shapes while eschewing delicate modelling and creating artwork of totally different configuration. Their spirituality was best expressed in the dynamic scenes of Christ's Sufferings drawn in a continuous sequence with emotional gestures in a setting of intricate architectural tracery. Among the Serbs, this was the first "new wave" monument, usually referred to as the Palaeologan style in Byzantine art. Somewhat prior to the Peć frescos, the distinct new traits were manifested in 1294–95 by masters Michael Astrapas and his assistant Eutychius in their first famous monument, the Mother of God Peribleptos in Ohrid. These accomplished artists, schooled in Thessalonica where other members of the Astrapas family also participated in the city's intellectual and artistic life, worked together long afterwards, predominately in Serbia. It has not been proven that they made additions to the frescos in the Church of the Holy Apostles, but this could have been done by one of their assistants or by artisans with a similar training background. Parallel to them, other painters traversed the same developmental path, altered the church programmes and iconography and, in particular, the artistic expression. Members of the old Constantinople studios whose monuments are less known today, also had a large share in effecting these changes. The Protaton frescos in the large three-aisled church in Karyes on Mt. Athos are essentially similar to those in the church of the Holy Apostles, although they exhibit a greater mea-

sure of refinement and softer modelling. The two monuments, however, display a greater degree of refinement and the softness of modulation. They did not conserve the signatures of the artists nor any other inscriptions relating to the patrons of the church or the dates of their painted creations. It is only the Athonite tradition that has long and insistently been attributing the frescos of its main church to well-known artist Manuel Panselinos. Those frescos could have originated around the year 1300, as did those in the Church of the Holy Apostles. The subsequent development of this style, it will be seen, can be followed in the somewhat later churches in Kosovo itself.

The church of Saint Demetrius, 14th century: architecture

The Home of the Savior in Iice was considered the see of the Archbishopric, but in the first decades of the 14th century Serbian Church dignitaries preferred Peć, as it was safer and closer to the royal court. The archbishop's obligations regarding supervision of spiritual life, ecclesiastical judiciary and other matters imposed the need for more capable and broadly educated clerics; conditions for their work should have been but were not provided in the old metochion. Also some of the services which the archbishop needed to conduct were complex and required a more elaborate ritual space. The heads of church, therefore, rebuilt Žiča and added new churches to the Holy Apostles in Peć, enlarging the ritual space and adapting it to various religious rites.

The first archbishop, Nikodim (1317–1324), added a church to the northern side dedicated to St. Demetrius, patron saint of Thessalonica, whose cult, due to close ties with this Greek town, was revered by the Serbs. Nikodim replaced the 13th century lateral parekklesion, its length corresponding to the western part of the Holy Apostles, up to the height of the added transept. Appended to the main church, St. Demetrius was constrained in its design; best suited was the concise form of a single-nave church. It had an octagonal dome, large apse and certain extensions in places where the choirs were located in the older tradition of the Raška school. From the outside, in the roof construction, this is noticeable on the northern, open side.

In accordance with the spirit of earlier architecture, the interior of the church is well-lit and designed of a piece, while the altar space is separated from the nave by a well-preserved stone iconostasis. Parapet panels with door-ways in the middle, where the royal door is situated, are placed between nicely fashioned colonnettes; they, too, stand on the northern side in front of the prothesis, while everything in the upper part is joined a whole by a horizontal beam (epistyle). The low-relief ornaments on the panels belong to the elegant and strict dictates of Byzantine sculptural art and probably are the work of the same master who made the frame of the church portal, also resorting to ornaments from the classical repertoire (astragal, vine with palmettes and billet moulding). Broader analogies attest to sculptural work distinguishing parts or the sculptural decoration in Banjska as well.

Iconostasis, detail: parapet panels,
Church of Saint Demetrius, the Patriarchate of Peć, 14th century

In appearance and construction—the already mentioned "cellular" (i.e. cloissone) style of building with cubic stones, tiers of bricks and mortar links—Saint Demetrius is an articulation of the Byzantine concepts. The procedure itself is closely aligned with the manner of building of the Dečani entrance tower, the work of master-builder Djordje (George) and his brothers. A wider circle of builders and stone-masons from Serbia and the Adriatic coastal area was employed on raising shrines in Serbia, particularly in Kosovo, during the entire first half of the 14th century.

The character and position of the church of St. Demetrius in relation to the Holy Apostles can hardly be understood if taken in isolation, out of the context of the entire complex of the Patriarchate of Peć, which was to be built at a later date. Subsequent construction on the southern and western sides gave full meaning to the endowment of Archbishop Nikodim. One may well wonder whether the first, early deceased, donor had in mind the same design achieved in the following decade by his teacher and successor to the spiritual throne, Danilo II (1325–1337). Similar examples show that both of them may have been inspired by the same idea.

The Mother of God Hodegetria

Archbishop Danilo—as recalls Danilo's anonymous biographer—had the church of the Mother of God "Hodegetria of Constantinople" built to the south of the Holy Apostles. He did so out of gratitude for the support given to him in days of distress by the protectress of Mt. Athos and the

imperial capital, and he provided "Greek books and all church necessities" for the shrine and let monks "of Greek origin to "...perform divine service according to their custom." Broadly educated, Danilo was emotionally tied to Greek-language literature, as was his predecessor Nikodim who had translated from Greek the famous Jerusalem Typikon (rule) of St. Sabbas the Sanctified with its regulations of monastery life and description of divine services. Experts in Greek language and literature were needed in Serbia for many reasons, particularly after 1334 when Stefan Dušan conquered extensive areas of the Byzantine Empire.

The Hodegetria's shrine was symmetrical to the church on the northern side. With its forms and internal structure it repeated the widespread cross-in-square layout typical of Byzantine architecture, clearly manifested not only in the ground plan, but also in the lead-sheathed roofs. The central part is topped by an octagonal dome on a low cubic base supported by four piers; laterally, the arms of the cross are barrel-vaulted, making the upper section cross-like, while lower, longitudinally vaulted bays are in the corners. In accordance with the ideas of Archbishop Danilo himself, the prothesis chapel and the diaconicon as independent ritual areas are dedicated to St. Arsenije of Serbia and St. John the Forerunner. At a later date, when Archbishop Danilo was buried there, the north-western part of the nave was separated by a canopy. The interior, however, retained its original layout which was not disturbed by the installation of a stone altar screen with Romanesque capitals.

The apertures which were executed, either at the wish of the donor or by their own intent, by masters from coastal workshops, render a more complex image of the stonework. Single-light and two-light windows, generally distinct both in profile and in the selection of modest decorative motifs, display, in this case as at Dečani, Romanesque forms and Gothic slightly pointed arches, sometimes with quatrefoil apertures in the lunette. To them belongs the two-light mullioned window on the northern side of the Saint Demetrius, executed at a later date, perhaps because the Archbishop Nikodim died before the building was finished.

The Narthex

To the south of the Mother of God Hodegetria, Danilo added a chapel dedicated to Saint Nicholas, and at the front of all three buildings he built an open narthex. The appearance of the whole viewed from the south is represented on a model which the donor, by the mediation of the prophet Daniel, offers to the patron, the Virgin Mary on a throne. The vividly modulated representation shows only the structures raised by Danilo II, and carefully registers their appearance. For this reason the model represents a precious source for reconstruction of those parts of the complex which disappeared at a later date or were rebuilt in another form. The portico on the southern side which protected the entrances to all three structures built by the Archbishop Danilo—the church of the Mother of God, the narthex and Saint Nicholas's chapel, belongs to them, as well.

Construction of religious buildings close to one another, particularly within the confines of a monastery, was a familiar feature of the architecture of the Byzantine Empire and Constantinople itself. The Peć donors had opportunities to see similar complexes, particularly at Mt. Athos. Both Nikodim and Danilo were priors of the Hilandar Monastery for several years and knew other monasteries well, the oldest of which, the Lavra of Saint Athanasius, had similar spatial coordinates: three parallel churches with a common narthex. It is our belief that the monastery of Vatopedi, very close to the Serbian monks, may have been of special significance for Peć. Before founding their own monastery, St. Sava and Simeon Nemanja had lived there, lavished it with rich gifts and commissioned many buildings there; the fraternity of Vatopedi respected them as donors.

The cluster of catholicon in Vatopedi is laid out in a similar fashion and dedicated to the same saints: the northern church to St. Demetrius, the southern one to St. Nicholas, and the oldest one, situated in the center, to the Mother of God, the protectress of Mt. Athos. In Peć, at the Holy Apostles, all the shrines which by their position and ritual correspond to the Vatopedi complex were added in the course of a single decade. Both donors, who arrived from Mt. Athos to take high positions in the Serbian Church wanted to transfer to Serbia prototypes from this great Orthodox monastic center.

This was reflected on the façades with strong red hues like those on the churches of the most prominent Athonite monasteries. It is likely that the walls of the original Hilandar church, replaced later by King Milutin, had been painted in the same way. The earliest traces of red color were found in Peć on the Holy Apostles which were painted having Žiča as a model, and that practice, within the framework of emulating Athonite customs, continued to be pursued in finishing the other churches in the complex.

Archbishop Danilo's buildings with their dark red façades had rich ornaments covering the entire surface below the roof cornices, archivolts, lunettes and window frames. Earlier, the rows of stones and bricks had been painted to imitate builders' facing, covering the coarse tissue of walls and mortar. Only some of the decorative elements were adopted in Peć, for example: the checker board. However, ornaments typical of wall painting and book illumination were predominantly used in a rich repertoire ranging from antique motifs to geometric patterns, mazes and ornaments characteristic of the Middle Ages. All the decoration was carried out in fresco technique which enabled it to retain its basic forms and freshness of color after six and one half centuries of exposure to sun and precipitation.

Painted decoration of this kind later became the object of interest among experts because of the fact that several decades later bas-reliefs with similar decorative elements

Entrance of the Church of the Mother of God Hodegetria,
east wall of the narthex, the Patriarchate of Peć

Family Tree of the Nemanjić Dynasty, east wall of the narthex, the Patriarchate of Peć, ca. 1331

Family Tree of the Nemanjić Dynasty, detail